

CHRIST'S
IMPORTUNITY
WITH
SINNERS
To accept of HIM.

By S. Bold, Rector of Steple, Dorset.

*All day long have I stretched forth my hands
unto a disobedient and gainsaying People.
Rom. 10. 21.*

*As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no
pleasure in the death of the Wicked, but
that the Wicked turn from his way and
live: Turn ye, turn ye from your evil
ways; for why will ye die? Ezek. 33. 11.*

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CHRIST
IMPORTUNITY

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SENNERS

To receive of T.

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1871-1872



THE
PREFACE
TO THE
READER.

READER,

THE Happiness and Glo-
ry of Heaven, and the
Horror and Anguish of
Hell, are most certain, stable, and
durable Estates. We have as
great, as convincing, and as satisfy-

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ing Evidence, that wicked, ungodly, and impenitent Sinners, shall be for ever inexpressibly and unconceivably miserable, as is fit for reasonable Creatures to have in this World, and as Infinite Wisdom hath thought meet to afford. The Evidence is such, that whosoever would pretend to require more suitable, more proper, and more powerful discoveries, were he put to invent Methods of his own for his particular satisfaction, would have as reasonable, as just, and as good grounds, after his Humour and Fancy were gratified, to continue an Infidel as before; see Luke 16. 30, 31. He that thinks it a disparagement to his Wit, or a blemish to his Courage, to acquiesce in the Testimony of

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of God, as delivered in our Bibles, might with greater assurance refuse his assent to the Damn'd themselves, did he see them in Flames, and hear their personal acknowledgments, that their Vices and Sins had wrought them all that misery. For why should he heed and credit them who have not trick enough to disguise, or obstinacy enough to deny their Guilt.

The subsequent Discourse was not design'd for them whose unnatural Immoralities, or studied Incredulity, has given them an elevation (as they conceit) above conviction. If nothing but particular Experience, will assure them of eternal and unsufferable Torments,

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I leave them (as Persons out of the reach of Ratiocination and Discourse) to what will certainly overtake them, and that before they are willing.

And therefore intending the following Discourse, especially for the plain and ordinary sort, who have not lost all sense, I will briefly address to them in a Stile proportionable to the plainness and familiarity used in the Discourse it self.

I entreat you, who retain any sparks of Humanity, who have a sense that your Souls are Immortal, who acknowledg there is some difference between Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice, and whom your
general

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general Profession do own that the Scriptures are the Word of God; I say, I do beg, and most earnestly beseech you, by all that should be dear and precious unto you, to think seriously a little on the following Particulars. Be so just to your selves, so respectful to your Maker, so civil and kind to them who do most passionately desire your everlasting Happiness, as to allow a few sober thoughts about Matters which be of most necessary and unspeakable importance unto you. Why should you rush upon God's Wrath, precipitate and heedlessly throw your selves headlong into unquenchable Burnings, and grieve and wound the

A 5. Hearts

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The Preface

Hearts of those who incessantly pray, and desire, and long, and wait, for your endless Good and Comfort. Be prevailed with then to consider, with some sedateness and calmness, these few Instances.

1. Though God made Man at first a very excellent, holy, upright, and unblemish'd Creature, yet now we are all by Sin defiled, and made unholy, and brought under Guilt. So that as long as we remain in our natural and unregenerate Estate, we are obnoxious and liable to God's Curse, and have a just right to all the terrible
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Discoveries, and most dreadful Effects of Divine and Infinite Justice; see *Rom.* 5. 12. & 1. 18. *Ephes.* 2. 1, 2, 3. *John* 3. 36.

2. God hath not left us remedilessly in that sad and deplorable, and as to all meer Creature-relief, helpless Estate, into which we are sunk by Sin: But of his abundant rich and free Grace, He hath provided us an Allsufficient Saviour and Redeemer, and hath opened unto us a Door of Hope. He hath given his own Son to assume our Nature, and to make Peace and Reconciliation for us. By and through this Son of God, Pardon, Peace, and Mercy,

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Mercy, deliverance from Sin,
Guilt, Misery, and Eterna
Damnation is to be obtained,
and no other way; see *Rom.* 5.
8, 9, 10. 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. *Gal* 4. 4, 5.
1 *John* 2. 1, 2. *Act.* 4. 12.

3. The Lord Jesus Christ
having accomplished all that
Work he undertook, and which
was appointed him to finish
upon Earth; and being entred
into his glorious Administra-
tion, doth make most gracious
Offers of himself, his Love, his
Mercy, his Spirit, and Benefits,
unto poor Sinners, and is very
importunate with them to en-
tertain and accept of the same;
Ephes. 4. 7, to 14. *Act.* 13. 26.
1 *Cor.* 5. 19, to the end. 4.

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4. Multitudes who have the Gospel, and partake of the Ministry of the Word, and make a profession of Religion, and have these gracious Offers made unto them, do not suitably entertain, but despise and reject Christ and his Benefits. They stubbornly refuse to submit to his Authority, to comply with his Terms, and imploy themselves in his Service. Nay, many offer him the greatest abuses and contempt they can devise; see *Mat. 22. 1, 2, &c. Luke 19. 14. John 5. 40. Act. 13. 46.* And do not the Lives and Practices of multitudes professing Christianity, demonstrate all this? Look into your Hearts,

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Hearts, and examine the ordinary course of your Conversations, Shall you not there find sufficient and full proof, that hitherto you have rejected him? That yet he hath no room in your Hearts, no influences on your Practices! O, what Ignorance, what Rancor, Malice, Revenge, Hatred, Wrath, unmortified powerful Lusts; what Covetousness, Earthly-mindedness, Carnality, Pride, Hypocrisy; what backbiting, lying, slandering, evil-speaking, prophane and common Swearing, vain, frothy, foolish, unedifying Words and Discourse; what common constant neglect of the Worship

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ship, and Service of God, in Families, and in Private. What sleighting and contemning God's Word and Ordinances! nay, what ridiculing, and making a sport of all serious Religion! what Drunkenness and Whoredom, Intemperance and Wantonness, Oppression, Injustice, Violence, and innumerable other most notorious and abominable wickednesses, may multitudes of pretended Christians every where observe in, and justly charge themselves with? Now, are these the Fruits of Christ's gracious and holy Presence! Was Christ of such a Mind! Did He do such Things! Does he any where coun-

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countenance and allow of such things ? Can those Hearts which cherish such Lusts, and from which such polluted streams, and corrupt Fruits do proceed, be a Temple for the Holy Jesus to dwell in ? Are not these the Fruits of the Flesh, which shut the Heart against Christ, and exclude those who cherish and practise them out of the Kingdom of Heaven ? *Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21. Rev. 21. 8. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Ephes. 4. 29, 31.*

5. All those who enjoying the Gospel, do stubbornly and finally reject Christ, and his gracious Offers, as their Guilt doth

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doth unmeasurably exceed other Peoples, who have not the Light and Means, the Calls and Offers they have, so they may justly expect, that their Damnation, Misery, and Torment, will exceedingly outweigh, and be increased beyond other Peoples. O, Sirs, who can think of your Danger, your Misery, that dreadful Portion which is in store for you, without Tears and Groans, without Trembling and Fainting of Heart and Soul? read with attention *Prov. 1. 24, &c. Heb. 12. 25. Matth. 11. 21, to 25.*

6. Those

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6. Those who do truly receive and entertain Christ, and close with his gracious Offers, are very much changed and altered from what they themselves were, and all are by Nature. It is not a change of Name, or a change of Opinion, or a change from a Party, or a change as to any thing which is purely External, which will serve turn to prove, that you have indeed closed with Christ. It must be a real change of the Heart, a change of Principles, of Ends, and Purposes, a change of the whole bent and exercise of all the Faculties and Powers of the
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the Soul, and a change of Life, and course of Conversation. He that truly receives Christ, loves him with all his Heart, gives him the preheminence in every thing, delights in his Laws, resigns up himself entirely to his Disposal and Government, depends and relies on his Merits, Allsufficiency, and Faithfulness, rejoices in his Comforts, and acquiesces in a patient expectation of his coming, and the accomplishment of his Promises:

Gal. 6. 14, 15. 2 Cor. 5. 17.

Rom. 8. 8, 9. Tit. 2. 11, 12, 13,

14. Tit. 3. 4, to 9.

Now

Now

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Now do you think on these things seriously, especially examine, search and consider diligently the Scriptures you are referr'd unto, and apply them faithfully and impartially to your own Consciences and Lives. Make no delay, stand not out in opposing Christ any longer. Do not deceive and flatter your own Souls. Remember that God is True, and Faithful, and Just. That the Blood, and Love, and calls of Christ, will not be lost; but if they be not carefully improved and closed with, they will bring Vengeance upon you to the uttermost. Remember that Christ's Invitations and Intreaties will not be very much longer con-

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continued unto you. It will not
be long before you must lie down in
the Dust, 'twill be but a little time
more that you shall hear these Calls
and Intreaties. In a little while
you will be past reading the Scrip-
tures, hearing Sermons, having
Opportunities to cry and pray for
Mercy and Grace with Hope.
O, how fearful will your Estate
be, if you resist all Christ's Calls
to accept of Him and Grace, till
he withdraws himself in anger, and
resolves he will never speak a word
more of Peace or Incouragement
unto you, or entertain a favoura-
ble thought towards you? You must
before long, quit all you see your
Hearts on here; Riches, Applause,
carnal Delights, Sports and Mer-
riments,

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riments, will in short time take their leave, and fly away from you. Alas, get what you can here, if you are without Christ, you are miserable, comfortless, helpless. Ere long you will see Death, and Judgment, and Hell, plainly before you; now, what will relieve and support you then? O what Trifles, what Torments will your Lusts, and all worldly Enjoyments and Entertainments appear and be then? What will you do, if you persist to deny Christ admittance, when the Lord Jesus shall come in flaming Fire, &c. 2 Thess. 1. 7, 8, 9. O what a dreadful Spectacle will Christ in Glory be, to all the obstinate Despisers, Contemners, and Slighters of Him,
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his Grace, his Spirit, his Word, his Ordinances, his People, his Messengers? How full of horror, amazement, and terror, will the appearance of Christ be, to all those against whom his Blood will rise, and plead for Vengeance? Press these things on your own Hearts, shew some love now at last to your own Souls. Build not your Hopes and Confidence on your belonging to any Congregation or Party, nor on the enjoyment of outward Gospel-priviledges; but hasten to Christ indeed, and never be at rest till savingly united unto him. Do not only read but practise good Books; Be not only hearers, but doers of the Word, lest you deceive your own Souls, Jam.

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1. 22. If you get any good by this Discourse, give God all the Praise and Glory. And when you have got an interest in Christ, make use of it at the Throne of Grace; not only for your self, but to further the spiritual Happiness, and eternal Salvation of him, who earnestly desires and prays for your everlasting Welfare.

S. B.

Rev.



REVEL. iii. 20.

Behold, I stand at the Door, and knock : if any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and be with me.

THE Condescension of our Blessed Saviour to poor Sinners, is very extraordinary and miraculous. That reiterated Affronts, and multiplied Provocations, do (as it were) but only lengthen out his Patience, and add warmth and earnestness to his Importunity, is indeed the highest demonstration imaginable of a-
stonishing Kindness, and a Love which cannot be parallel'd.

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But this is not to encourage our Obstinacy and Refractoriness; It should overcome our Sturdiness, and conquer and master our Stubbornness; it should soften and make us tractable and compliant. O the hardness of that Heart, the searedness of that Soul and Conscience, which will not be melted into a remorse for Sin, and a joyful unfeigned closure, with the Offers of Salvation and Mercy, at the earnest Entreaties, and passionate Courtings of the Eternal and Almighty God! *What shall we say then? shall we continue in Sin, because Grace doth abound? God forbid.* (Rom. 6. 1, 2.) How shall we, who are thus solicited from Heaven, thus importuned by the Blessed Jesus, live any longer in a contradiction unto him?

The Love and Condescension of Christ is such, and doth so eminently appear in many Instances, especially in these mentioned in the Text, our Blessed Saviour himself seems to be almost transported at the consideration of the same. That the Son of God, *who thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, should take such notice of Enemies, forlorn, despicable Wretches, miserable Sinners (who

(who at best, whilst in their natural Estate, can lay claim to nothing but Wrath and Damnation) as to stand before them, come unto them, and use all manner of earnestness with them, to prevail with them to yield him admittance into their Hearts ; that by this means they may be advanced, and have Communion and Fellowship with him, is so strange, so unheard of a piece of Condescension, so wonderful, so surprising, so amazing an Instance of Love, our Saviour himself, at the mentioning of it, seems to be in a kind of rapture. He doth Preface it with a Note of Admiration. *Behold !*

If we should look upon it as a mighty Condescension in a great Prince or Emperor, to descend from his Throne, and come personally to visit some poor Subject, who has no habitation or place of Abode, but some small weather-beaten crazy Cottage ; nay, to visit some infamous Rebel, justly confined to a Dungeon, covered with nastiness and filth ; and there importune and entreat this miserable Wretch to be reconciled unto him, that they may both dwell together, and mutually rejoice in each others

society; What ought we then to think of our Blessed Saviour's soliciting and entreating, with the greatest earnestness, for admittance into our Hearts?

We may take notice of two general Parts in the words.

I. The main substance of the Verse, which consists of two parts. 1. Our Saviour's earnestness to be admitted into Sinner's Hearts; *I stand at the Door and knock, &c.* 2. The Priviledges and Satisfaction consequent upon our receiving of him; *I will come in to him, &c.*

II. The way and manner how all this is commended to our consideration, *Behold!*

I intend to say but little of this latter; and therefore as it stands first in the Text, so it shall immediately come under our consideration.

This word, *Behold*, noteth, that something follows which is of weight, and deserves to be observed. Indeed it would greatly become and profit us, to take a particular and distinct notice of those

those places of the Holy Scripture, which are thus solemnly recommended to our consideration. For God certainly best knows what is of greatest use for us : And to suffer such Passages to slip our observation, without a diligent heedful attendance to them, which he hath set such a Mark upon, and points out so carefully to our study, argues much disregard to his Wisdom and Goodness, and that our Religion is very weak and unoperative.

You may more particularly take notice, that this word, *Behold*, hath three special significations in the Holy Scriptures ; or there are three several ends and purposes why it is used in the Scriptures.

1. There is a *Behold* of Caution : To warn us to take heed of what will be extreamly hurtful and injurious to our Souls. John 5. 14. *Behold, thou art made whole : sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.* God has done very much for thee, and signally holpen thee and delivered thee ; take care thou do not wilfully provoke him again, lest he afflict thee worse, lest thou be hardened in thy Sins, and Divine Wrath come

upon thee to the uttermost.

2. A *Behold* of Admiration! Which calls us to wonder and admire, with all the Powers of our Soul, at the exceeding Riches of Divine Goodness and Grace. 1 John 3. 1. *Behold, what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God!*

3. A *Behold*, designed to excite and stir us up to take notice of some important Matter speedily, and to improve it without delay. 2 Cor. 6. 2. *Behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of Salvation.*

This word, here in the Text, may have all these Significations attributed to it.

1. As designed to admonish us against resisting Christ any longer, seeing he hath stood so long, and urged us to give him admittance, lest if we continue to keep our Hearts lock'd and barr'd against him, he should depart from us in displeasure, and never make us another offer of his Love and Grace. O how fearful a thing is it to send Christ away grieved and enraged, because of our final perverseness and stubbornness,

borneſs, after he hath been long woiſing and perſwading us to accept of him and his Benefits!

2. As repreſenting to us how great, how wonderful, how unexpected an Inſtance of Love Chriſt is pleaſed to vouchſafe us. What greater Love can Chriſt expreſs and ſhew to you than this? He experienced and met with very hard and injurious uſage here on Earth; He underwent many afflicting grievous pains; He ſuffered a very infamous tormenting kind of Death. He endured for Sinners infinitely more than we can conceive, yet did not all this al- lay and cool his Affection, he loves us ſtill, with a Love as ſtrong as ever. What Love is this! Love ſtronger than Death, Love that the Floods cannot drown; Love, which neither Sufferings, nor Death, nor Life, nor Glory, can overcome. Here is room indeed for our admiration and wonder; ceaſe then your wondering at other things, which ſeem ſtrange and unuſual, they are all nothing, if compared with this Love of Chriſt. Let all your admiration center here, on this fathomleſs, this infinite, incomprehenſible, and un-
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searchable Object of it. What can we justly wonder at, besides the infinite Riches of our Saviour's Love and Condescension, unless at that horrible and astonishing Prodigy, that People should be so insensible, sottish, and sturdy, as to slight, neglect, and despise all the exceeding abundance of the Riches of Divine Grace and Kindness?

3. As exciting and stirring us up to take notice of our dear Saviour; and with what tenderness and condescension he carries himself towards us. Behold, thy Saviour doth stand without, and has been long waiting on thee, and doth still entreat thee earnestly to give him admittance. O take notice how the King of Glory is come to visit thee! and is desirous to have communion with thee! Behold, Salvation is now come to thy House; and what! wilt thou deny reception to, and shut thy Doors against such a Guest?

We may fairly enough furnish ourselves with this Instruction from this word, *Behold*, as used in this place, viz.

That the Lord Jesus Christ hath wonderful Love to poor Sinners, is a Truth of

of extraordinary importance, and should be carefully observed and attended to.

But I design not to insist upon this any further, than by acquainting you briefly with two things, which clear and confirm the Proposition.

1. The extraordinary usefulness of this Truth to us.

2. The extraordinary strangeness of the Thing it self.

1. The extraordinary usefulness of this Truth to us. What is neither excellent in it self, nor useful to us, we justly overlook, and take no notice of; or if we do, we therein betray our weakness and imprudence.

Now we have ordinarily many Interests and Designs on foot, but we readily acknowledg, that we are bound on all accounts to pursue with most care, earnestness and diligence, those things we are assured will most of all farther our highest Interests, those Concernments we are most affected with, and prefer and value above all the rest. If a Man have a Trial depending for his whole Estate, or for his Life, and can hear of a certain Course he may take, which will infallibly secure his Cause,

he will attend unto this Business, before all his other Affairs; and though there be other Matters he would be diligent and industrious about, were this his principal Business well settled, yet he omits and neglects them; he lays them aside at present, that he may follow his greater and more important Affair, with greater freedom and less disturbance. Now there is nothing so much concerns us, as to be truly and savingly acquainted with the Riches of Divine Grace, to be sensible of the gracious Visits Christ doth make, and to embrace and close with his blessed Motions. You may lose your Lands, be rob'd of your Mony, have your Houses and Goods all burnt about your Ears, and yet not be undone, nor irreparably miserable. But if you are ignorant of Christ, and regardless of his Visits, and destitute of an Interest in his Love, you are poor, deluded, miserable, unhappy Wretches, whatever Portion you have of the Wealth, and Honour, and Applause of this World.

Indeed, too many slight Christ, and make no account of his Love. People who are sunk in their Lusts, whose Understandings Satan hath blinded, in
whom

whom Satan rules, and by whom they are hurried away headlong towards Hell, as the *Gadarens* Swine were into the Deep. But, O! let us take heed we do not tread in their Steps, lest we drink of their Cup, and partake of their Portion.

The Apostle tells you, *It is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners,* 1 Tim. 1. 15. What is it then, that after all his Sufferings, and being ascended into Glory, he doth still continue to express and testify as great Love as ever to us? Shall we despise the choicest offers of his Love? Shall we despise, or take no notice of such a Truth as this, that Christ doth stoop to visit us, and importunes our acceptance of him? O, what vile, what unworthy, what ungrateful Persons shall we then approve our selves! In how forlorn and deplorable a State are all the stubborn and obstinate despisers and contemners of Christ! *Heb. 2. 3.* O, Sirs! did you understand the worth of those precious Souls you are intrusted with; were you truly sensible of the sad and miserable Estate you are in by Nature,
How

How would your Hearts leap within you ; what extasies of Joy would you be in, to hear such news as this, that the Lord Jesus Christ hath such wonderful Love for such Sinners as you are !

To affect you a little with the extraordinary usefulness of this Truth, I will only lay three Considerations before you.

1. This adds weight and worth, beauty and loveliness to all the other Truths of the Gospel. It is not only the weightiest Truth of all the rest, but it is that which adds very much worth to them all. Alas, what would all the other have availed us without this ? It was indeed a great and a marvelous thing, that the Lord Jesus would descend, would come down from his glorious Throne, and submit himself to all the hard usage ungodly Sinners would treat him with ; but what would the Death and Sufferings of Christ have profited us, if these had quenched his Love ? if his Affection to, and Favour for us, had died when he gave up the Ghost ? What the better should we be, if we could climb up to Heaven, and God and Christ would not love us when there ? This is that
which

which adds weight and loveliness to all other Truths, that Christ having overcome Death, and conquered all Difficulties and Discouragements, doth still love us, and his Love is heightened by the sharpness of his Conflict. This sweetens the Thoughts of his Passion, this endears him exceedingly to the believing, to the ingenuous Soul. O what lustre is there on every Truth, when this of his perpetuated Love shines upon it? Had Christ ceased to love poor Sinners, when he was ascended into Heaven, alas, what comfort would it afford us, that such things were done, that such things were suffered, that such things were promised as the Scriptures Record, but all by one who hath no love for us? It is this that enlivens all the rest, that Christ still continues to love Sinners.

2. This is of extraordinary use for our encouragement in a course of Holiness. Should not *the Love of Christ constrain us*? Shall we not love him again? What will ye return him for all his unspeakable Kindness and Grace? Will you not testify your Love to him in such a way as he likes? What doth he call for, but Love? and how will he have this

this Love express'd, but by Piety and Obedience? *If ye love me, keep my Commandments, John 14. 15. Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you, John 15. 14.* What an encouragement is it to a Holy Life, when we can truly say, we are hereby testifying our Love to our dear Saviour, in such a way as he doth most approve? Whom should we serve, whom should we obey, if not him who hath, and doth love us still in so extraordinary a manner?

We are ('tis true) too prone to serve Satan and our Lusts; but what reason have we to do so? Is Damnation and Hell so sweet and so obliging, we should drudg and toil all our time for such a Purchase? Can you seriously think Satan who tempts and solicites you to Sin, hath any love for you? And will you serve him who seeks your eternal ruin so industriously, before the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath given you so many convincing Testimonies of his Love?

It is an amazing, and very sad thing to observe, how People do prefer the drudgery and vassalage of Satan, before the liberty and freedom their Saviour hath

hath purchased for them. That notwithstanding Christ doth love them so affectionately, yet Satan should have so many to run violently after him to Hell; and Christ should have so few to follow him to the Mansions of Bliss and Glory.

It is a sad, but yet too just a representation of Man's Folly, Ingratitude, and Wickedness, which St. Cyprian makes, when he brings in the Devil boasting against Christ, and insulting over People in this manner; *Ego pro istis nec sanguinem fudi, &c.* (*Serm. de Elymos*) I have not shed one drop of Blood for any of all these my Followers; I never took any pains to do them any good; my study, and care, and diligence hath ever been, and ever shall be, to bring them to Death and Damnation; and yet notwithstanding all this, *Tuos tales, demonstra mihi, Christe.* Shew me, O Christ, so many, such busy, such painful, and such dutiful Servants of thine any where, as I can shew thee every where of mine. Shall the Envy and Malice of Satan be more powerful with you, to draw you into Damnation, than the prodigious Love of
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the Son of God, to win you unto Holiness and Glory ?

O ! were we but duly affected with the Love Christ bears to us, we should not be able to resist its Charms ! O, what pious exemplary, praising Christians would this make us ? Who ever hath a true and real sense of this Love in his Heart, will be transformed by it into the likeness of him, who doth thus love him. The reason why we are no better, that we resemble Christ so little, is, because we are ignorant of his Love ; tho we may know somewhat of it notionally, so as to tincture and adorn our Discourse, yet our Hearts are not touched with it, and brought under its Efficacy and Power. Were our Hearts but melted with the consideration and sense of this Love, O how powerfully would it engage us in the Ways and Work of our Saviour ! With what vigour and delight should we be carried through the whole course of Christian Duty, and new Obedience ?

3. It is of exceeding great use, for our support and comfort under Trials, Temptations, Sufferings and Troubles in the World ; and when we are exercised

cised with deep apprehensions of our own sinfulness and vileness. Affliction doth try Friends. A Man whilst he doth prosper and flourish in the World, shall have many pretended Friends, who will fall from and disown him in Adversity. We are subject to Trials and Temptations, under which all those things that flatter our Senses, and which People court and labour for with all their might, will either take their flight from us, or at best, lie by us, as insipid useless things: Nothing but a sense of Christ's Love will then befriend us.

And I know not any sort of People more exposed to Trials and Assaults in the World, than the People of God; nor are there any whom Satan doth ordinarily set upon with fiercer violence, than poor Sinners, when first beginning to look out after, and listen unto Christ. And as these are liable to such Calamities, so God provides for their support and comfort under them. If it be a great relief to a Person under outward trouble, that he hath a Friend to stand by him, and counsel him, and appear for him, what is it to a true Believer to be assured of the Love of Christ? That he
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hath one on his side, who is alſufficient for him, be his Circumſtances what they will, and who will never fail him nor forſake him?

What tho I be poor and miſerable, and deſtitute and afflicted in the World? What tho I be made as the filth and the off-ſcouring of all things? Chriſt loves me never the leſs for that. Nay, ſuppoſe I have great Doubts in my Mind, and my Soul is full of heavineſs for my Sins, and I am ready to cry out, O! my Sins are not ordinary and uſual Sins, they have been aggravated above meaſure! I cannot ſee any thing in my ſelf, but impurity, filth, and guilt. I do not perceive how any thing but Damnation can belong to me! O my Miſery! O my Unhappineſs! O my Guilt! I am ſo laden with Sin, my Guilt lies ſo heavy upon my Spirit; Terror and amazement, fear and horror, do ſo prevail in my Soul, I am not able to bear up under the ſame, my Heart fails me, and my Spirit is gone! Why now, one glimps of Chriſt, one taſte of his Goodneſs, a ſenſe of his Love, will revive and exhilarate the Soul, and diſperſe all theſe Clouds, theſe Darkneſſes and Storms.

Storms. There is no condition a Person can be in, but if Christ will dart into him a Ray of his special Love, he will thence receive mighty, even inexpressible support and comfort. The continued Love of Christ, is the most sovereign Cordial in every Estate and Condition. We may go through Fire and Water, we may adventure upon any suffering for the Name of Christ, being assured of his Love. O! what an excellent chearing Scripture is that of the Epistle to the *Romans*, Chap. 8. v. 35, to the end?

What would the Scripture be to us; how should we be effectually excited and encouraged to a course of Piety? Or, what could support us under Burthens and Troubles, if Christ did not continue his Love to Sinners?

2^{ly}, In the second place we are to consider the extraordinary strangeness of the thing it self. We commonly take as particular notice as we can, of strange and unwonted Occurrences. How do People view and observe Comets and Blazing Stars? How do they flock to see any strange sort of Beast, when exhibited to be seen? We admire and
wonder

wonder at things, which are considerable only by reason of their strangeness and rarity; Things which are not of any great worth, nor cannot produce us any profit and real advantage. O! therefore, let us be so wise as to turn all our admiration unto that which is truly strange, and equally advantagious and comfortable?

The Love of Christ to Sinners, is the strangest thing that ever was: *Without controversy great is the Mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the Flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the World, and received up into Glory, 1 Tim. 3. 16.* This is a thing so strange, even in the first Instances of it, the blessed Angels stand amazed at it, and desire to look into it, 1 Pet. 1. 12.

If a Prince, the only Son of a King or Emperor, should condescend to take notice of a mean traiterous Wretch, ready to have all the Torments and Punishments his Treason deserved, inflicted on him, and plead for this Person; yea, deny himself all the Pleasures, Honours, and Satisfactions in his Father's Court; yea, submit himself to all manner of
Indig-

Indignities for many Years together, to procure the other's Pardon. And being at last received to Court again, and living in the greatest pomp and splendour, should come to this Person whose Life he had saved at the forementioned rate, and entreat and beseech, and court him to be reconciled to him; and that an intimate familiarity and correspondence may be settled betwixt them, promising him all the Entertainments and Satisfactions he doth participate of himself; Would not this be looked on by all as a most prodigious Instance of Affection and Love?

But alas! what is this to that we are now discoursing of? Here is the Son of God, who is equal with God, God blessed for ever; who is the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person; whose Name is Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. This is the Person who condescended to take on him our Nature, who lived for many Years together a Life that was very mean, and to outward appearance very contemptible. What Indignities did he suffer from Men!

how

how deep did he drink of the Cup of God's Wrath! when groaning, and praying, and sweating Blood in the Garden! when expostulating so earnestly with his Father on the Cross! He submitted to Death, yea, he became obedient to Death, even the *Death of the Cross*: The most painful, the most lingering, the most ignominious and cursed sort of Death then known in the World. And all this was to reconcile Sinners and Enemies unto God, and to save them from that eternal Misery and Damnation they could no other way be saved from. And after all this, having raised himself to Life, and being received into Glory, he continues his Love to these Sinners, and many ways importunes and solicites them to accept of the Mercy and Blessings which cost him so dear; and to yield themselves up into the Bonds of Friendship, that a constant mutual correspondence may be maintained betwixt them. Is not this an incomprehensible astonishing Prodigy of Love? what can be compared unto it? What Heart so hard, such Condescension, such Love, such passionate court-
ing will not soften and overcome? What

so

so strange, what so obliging as this, that the Son of God should entreat and beseech Rebels to accept of Pardon? should court and make so much ado, be so importunate, and keep such a stir with us, who are only held by his Hand from falling into Hell, to accept of Heaven! There is nothing so strange as this, unless it be that cursed Heart, which is too obdurate and stubborn to be overcome and won, by so kind, so winning, and so mighty a Force as this is.

Applie. What care now should we take to be thoroughly instructed and settled in this great Truth? Do not labour only to be acquainted with it in the Theory, but endeavour and pray that a saving Knowledge and Belief of it may be wrought in you by the Spirit of God. This is a Matter concerns thee much, thy Salvation depends upon it. If thou lose thy Soul, thou lovest all: If thou art ignorant of the Love of Christ, if this Love have no influence on thee, thou art miserable indeed. All true Comfort is wrap'd up in this.

Acts 4. 12. O study this great Truth, and

and do not desist or leave off, till it have its proper influence on thy Affections, Heart, and Life. Let the Love of Christ constrain thee. Resolve to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Admire and adore the Love of Christ: Improve the knowledg and consideration of it, to fix and promote thy Faith, thy Love, thy Hope, thy Patience, and every other Grace.

But I will not insist any longer on this first word, which is introductory, and should lead us attentively unto that which followeth.

The rest of the Verse acquaints us with our blessed Saviour's seeking for, and endeavouring to get admittance with us: and the Priviledges which shall accrue to those who hearken to him, and receive him.

I shall confine my self now unto the first of these, which is represented to us in these words, *I stand at the Door and knock*. Though in discoursing of this, I shall have occasion to acquaint you with the main Importance of some of the following words, viz. *If any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door.*

Our

Our Saviour's seeking and endeavouring to get admittance with us, is here exprest by three words.

1. Standing.
2. Knocking.
3. The word *Door*.

The Person, or rather the Heart of the Person, because of its being the principal Part of Man, and the Seat of the Affection, is often compared to, and called a House, a Temple, a Habitation. God hath a secret and real commerce with the Soul of every true Believer. He communicates much of himself, and imparts his Heavenly Graces unto every such Person ; He sets up his Government in that Soul, and he expresth his gracious Concernment with that Soul, by dwelling in it, by making that Person his House and Habitation. *Jesus answered and said, If a Man love me, he will keep my Words, and my Father will love him ; and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him, Joh. 14. 23. see Isa. 57. 15.*

The Lord Jesus makes very gracious Proposals to us ; He offers us his Blessings,

sings, his Graces, his Spirit, the Benefits of his Death and Passion, Himself. And entreats and beseeches us to accept of these, and give them room in our Hearts. His addressing of himself to us by way of instruction, perswasion, and tendering of these to us, is called his knocking at the Door. Our learning of him, accepting of, and closing with his Tenders, is called, our hearing his Voice, and opening to him.

It may be proper here to take notice ;

1. Of our Saviour's Posture.
2. Of his Gesture.

1. His Posture. *Echold, I stand.* Which notes both his Patience; how long he doth wait to be gracious, and what danger we are in, if we do not make a good use and improvement of his Patience and long-suffering, for he is in such a Posture, as notes a readiness of departure if he be not admitted.

2. His Gesture. *And knock.* Which notes his earnestness and importunity. The Lord Jesus, when he makes his visits unto the Soul, is not willing to depart

part, without bestowing some Blessing. He seems resolved not to take a denial. He will fasten some Good, some Blessing on thee, if there be any thing, either of ingenuity or of modesty in thee.

The Phrase is taken, from what is ordinarily observed in the Visits which People make to one another. As the Person which goeth to see another, doth commonly stand before the Door of that House where the other's Abode is; and desiring to have entrance, knocks, and makes a noise at the Door, till, if any one be in the House, he be taken notice of; which argues, he hath a desire to have some discourse and converse with the Person he comes to visit. Thus Christ sets forth his desire, and his earnestness, to have some commerce and familiarity with poor Sinners. He waits, he knocks, he useth all kind of importunity with them.

The Doctrine I design to insist on a little from these words, is this :

Doct.

The Lord Jesus Christ doth wait long, and useth much importunity with Sin-

Sinners, to prevail with them to accept of him and his Benefits. He stands at the door long, and knocks often, before we will take notice of him, and open unto him. Indeed, his own People, and Servants, are too apt to forget him, and to suffer him to wait and stay long, when he makes his after Addresses to them, before they rise and let him in. We are too prone to turn a deaf Ear to him, and admit any thing as an excuse for our not giving him so speedy and grateful a reception as we owe him. How often do even Believers forget themselves, and grow so remiss and drowsy, as to provoke him to withdraw himself, and deny them the sence of his gracious Prefence and Love! So that they must seek long, and undergo much trouble, before he will be found of them again. This you may see fully proved, if you seriously read and weigh the fifth Chapter of the *Song of Solomon*, from v. 1st, to the 9th.

And if those who have in some measure understood their need of Christ, and been affected with his Excellencies, and tasted how good the Lord is, may grow so negligent and careless, it cannot

not be very much wondered at, if Christ, when he makes his Addresses to others, who are still in their natural Estate, be not presently hearkened unto, but must use importunity before he find admittance. But yet the Sinner's either refusing or neglecting to hear him, and comply with him, is a thing so ill, nothing can excuse it.

Now this shews the weakness of Grace in many who are already regenerated. And what need the Best have to be always on their watch. And likewise, how strangely stupid and stubborn People are, till by the operation of the Holy Ghost, their Hearts are effectually wrought on and awakened. And, O how wonderful is the Condescension of the Blessed Jesus, in that he takes so much notice of, and doth with such patience and earnestness court, and strive to overcome such vile, such senseless, and such unworthy Creatures!

It is Christ that first takes notice of us, not we of him. *We love him, because he loved us first*, 1 John 4. 19. If Christ did never love and importune us, we should never love him. Should not Christ come and knock at our Doors,

we should never think of, nor look after him in good earnest.

How should we stand amazed at this ! It was when we were Enemies that Christ died for us ; and it is whilst we are in a state of Enmity, that he comes and entreats us to be reconciled to him. God might easily and fully have glorified his Justice in our eternal Damnation ; and yet how earnest is he with us, to accept of the happy Fruits of his Kindness ? It is, whilst we lie wallowing in our Blood, without pitty, that he sets his Love upon us, and saith unto us, *Live*. It is Christ's Work to bring us to a compliance with himself. He loves us first, he manifests his Love first, and he makes those discoveries of his Love powerful, & of force to work upon our stubborn Natures, and hard Hearts, before we will yield and acknowledg, either our own emptiness and need of him, or his wonderful Love and Condescension towards us. It is Christ that saith, *I will have Mercy upon her that had not obtained Mercy, and I will say to them which were not my People, Thou art my People ; and then they shall say, Thou art my God*, Hos. 2. 23. You see Christ speaks

speaks first, before we acknowledg him:
 Lord, what is Man that thou art
 mindful of him! or the Son of Man,
 that thou hast such regard unto him!
 What a Miracle of Condescension and
 Love is this, that the Lord Jesus Christ,
 that the Great and Eternal God should
 thus court and solicit Dust and Ashes!
 should represent himself so in love with
 sinful Worms!

In discoursing of this Truth, I shall
 endeavour,

- I. To explain and illustrate this, of
 Christ's waiting to be gracious to
 Sinners, and importuning them to
 accept of him.
- II. To shew you what our receiving
 of Christ doth import.
- III. To enquire what are the main
 Instances which hinder us from re-
 ceiving of Christ into our Hearts.
- IV. To offer a Reason or two, why
 Christ is thus importunate with
 Sinners.

C 4.

V. To

V. To make some Application of the whole.

I. I shall say something concerning Christ's waiting to be gracious to Sinners, and importuning them for admittance into their Hearts. These two things are both implied in, and signified by these words, *I stand at the Door, and knock.*

The one argues his Patience, and the stay he makes to be gracious unto us. This is the word, *Stand, I stand at the Door.* Now, how long hath Christ stood at your Doors? how long and often hath he been calling unto you for admittance, and as yet to no purpose? Indeed, some receive him very early: Happy they who bid so worthy, so desirable, so good a Guest, welcome betimes! They who are from their early Years acquainted with Christ, with whom they constantly keep a correspondence, and who hath long reigned in their Hearts, are happy People indeed. These are truly Heaven's Favourites.

But

But I am afraid the number of such is not very great. Alas! Christ is a great while slighted and contemned, before he is in any tolerable measures taken tice of, and hearkned unto in the World. O the Patience that Jesus Christ doth exercise towards Sinners! How many Days, and Weeks, yea Months, and Years, doth he stand waiting, before we will hear his Voice, and open unto him?

It is our great fault, and unhappiness too, that after we are in some measure acquainted with Christ, we are prone to neglect our Watch, and suffer our love to him to abate, and almost die: So that when he makes his fresh Approaches to us, and calls for admittance into our Hearts, we are ready to make excuses, till we force him to withdraw and hide himself from us, *Cant. 5. 2, 3.*

But alas! how many Years together do many stand out and resist him, tho he use never so many methods to win, and bring them to a compliance.

Nay, Christ doth not only wait all this time, but he manifests extraordinary patience on the account of their

demeanour towards him. Were there any one who had done us an injury, and we should go to, and promise him we will pass by the wrong, and entreat him that we may be Friends ; and that Party should refuse to let us into his House, should set us at defiance, and revile and reproach us, and do us greater Injuries than before, how would our Blood boil ? how would our Passions flame ? how unreconcilable should we be to him for the future ? But Jesus Christ doth otherwise to us ; He comes to us when in a state of Rebellion against him. He is ready to pardon us, pleads with us to accept his Favours, and demonstrates how real and hearty he is. He does, as it were, lay before us his Sufferings, and tell us, that all these Calamities, Pressures, and Sorrows were undergone for our sakes : And tho all this prove unsuccessful, we still refuse to hearken to him, and do proudly and contemptuously turn away from him, he doth not desist, but still stands and waits to see whether we will come to our selves, whether we will become more calm, and wise, and at last accept of the gracious Offers he doth make us.

O! what a number of Affronts and Provocations doth the Lord Jesus Christ patiently bear and pass by, whilst waiting to be gracious to his Enemies! How do Sinners set him at nought, and offer him the greatest contempt they can! and still he bears all, and stands waiting at their Doors.

Sinner! Thou that livest in known Sins, under the Ministry of the Gospel, and a profession of the Faith of Christ; thou hast had Christ waiting on thee a long while. Thou hast, as it were, heard him tell thee, It was Sin, even thy Sins, that made him a Man of Sorrows, and occasioned his being reckoned amongst Transgressors; that thy Sins contracted on him that load and burden, which made him sweat drops of Blood under the weight of it: That thy Sins nailed him to the Cross: That thy Drunkenness, thy Intemperance, thy Wantonness, thy Profaneness, thy Swearing, thy Worldly-mindedness, thy Sabbath-breaking, and thy other Sins, made him, when on the Cross, cry out, with so much apprehension and earnestness, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And doth Christ after
all

all this wait on thee, and importune thee to receive him ; and wilt thou dare, after all, to reject him ? Thou canst not (however) but acknowledg, that if after all this he continues thee the tenders of his Love, that his Patience is wonderful, thou must needs own, that to refuse him admittance, and despise his Offers, is very disingenuous.

O ! what stubbornness do many testify towards Christ, after he hath been long treating with them in this manner ? Has not Christ told thee these things in his Word ? Has he not (as it were) come to thee, and said, Behold, Sinner, these Hands, and these Feet, which were nailed to the Cross on thy account, to testify my Love to thee ? See how I was forsaken by all ! what I suffered for thy Sins ! how I was treated ! in what manner my extraordinary Grief did vent it self ! And now, behold, I come to thee, desiring to be received of thee, and entreating thee to accept the Benefits I have purchased by all my grievous Sufferings ! And wilt thou still reject him ? Wilt thou chide and rate thy Saviour away, after so many testimonies of incomprehensible Kind-

Kindness, Patience, and Love? Wilt thou, by thy carriage towards him, manifest that thou approvest what the Jews did unto him? Wilt thou, by a continued repeating of thy old Wickedness, discover how desirous thou art to crucify him again, and what pleasure thou takest in trampling his precious Blood under thy Feet? O, how great then is thy Guilt! how is thy Wickedness aggravated? What mayst thou well expect will become of thee? How dreadful is thy State! how great is thy Danger! But now, if after all this, Christ doth still wait, and make thee new tenders of Mercy; how astonishing must thou needs acknowledg his Love and his Patience to be?

The Patience of Christ doth most signally appear, in bringing home at last those Sinners who have been very notorious, and who have laboured against him, and stood out against, and resisted him a great while.

O! let this prevail with you all to yield up your selves speedily to Christ. You have resisted him too long already; take heed of repeating your Affronts against him, seeing he hath born with you

you so patiently hitherto. Surely he hath waited long enough, O, delay him no longer. The Fruit and Effect may be dreadful, if you resist any farther ; the Lord will not always be trifled with. Though the Offers of Grace may be long continued, they will not last for ever, if you go on stubbornly to despise and reject them. Take heed of refusing to receive and entertain Christ, once more, when he comes unto thee, lest thou shouldst provoke him to depart from thee, with resolution never to make thee a gracious visit, or see thee with favour any more. Do not thou provoke him to swear in his Wrath, thou shalt never enter into his Rest. Canst thou endure the eternal Displeasure of Almighty God ? Canst thou bear up under the direful and astonishing Punishments, which contemned Grace, and abused Patience and Goodness expose to ? Canst thou dwell with everlasting Burnings ? O, let the Longsuffering, the Patience, and the Goodness of thy Saviour, lead thee to Repentance, and prevail with thee to accept of, and close with him and his gracious Offers.

This

This shall serve at this time, concerning Christ's waiting to be gracious unto Sinners. I proceed to say something,

II. In the second place, of his importuning Sinners for admittance. This is noted by the word *knock*. Jesus Christ doth not only wait long, but useth much importunity, and is very earnest to get admittance with Sinners. He knocks, and knocks again; he repeats his Entreaties, and often renews his earnest Sollicitations, that we will not reject and despise him, but admit him into our Hearts, and bid him welcome. Now, what Condescension is this, that the Son of God should court and perswade us with so much warmth and fervour? That he who cannot receive any advantage from us, should thus importune us for our own advantage!

Indeed, this doth plainly manifest our baseness and stupidity, in that we are so hard to be wrought on, and affected with our most important Interests. And it doth as certainly and fully display and upbraid our wilfulness and impiety, when we stand out and finally resist Christ,

Christ, as it doth demonstrate the unparallel'd condescension and kindness of our Saviour.

O! what Demonstrations have we of the tenderness of Christ to Sinners? How do his Bowels yearn over us, when we are inconsiderately ruining our selves? How often doth he knock and entreat us to yield to him, and accept of him and his Benefits? O, how hard and stubborn are our Hearts! what, will not all the Divine Methods and Artifices win us, and bring us into a compliance with him, that loveth us above Life and Death?

I need mention but two Generals to evidence more distinctly unto you, how earnest and importunate the Lord Jesus is to be received by us.

1. The Arguments he doth use to perswade us to accept of him.
 2. The Instruments he doth imply about this Work, viz. to win us to comply with his gracious Motions and offers.
 3. The Arguments he doth use to prevail with us to accept of Him. He
- urgeth

urgeth the strongest Arguments, and presseth on us those Considerations, which carry along with them the greatest force and weight imaginable. And these are managed with all the heartiness and affectionateness that is possible. Arguments many, strong, various, and such as are most proper to have an influence on our Affections, Judgments, and Minds. Were any Motions urged, that had but the thousandth part of the reason, the least of these hath, to engage us to strike in, and close with any thing for our secular Advantage, how effectual would they prove! No Difficulties, no Straights, no Discouragements would affright or dishearten us. But when the greatest and most weighing Instances, as the Divine Wisdom can pitch upon, are urged by the Lord himself to engage us not to forsake our own Mercies, to attend to and close with our only Happiness. Alas! how unapprehensive, how unconcerned are we? We are then as little moved, as if the Arguments had no weight in them, or we had no Souls to take care of, and be saved.

If Satan hath a mind to draw us unto any Sin, or engage us in some destructive

tive and damning course, how easily
 doth he prevail? how soon doth he
 gain our Ear, our Hand, our Heart?
 How suddenly doth he hurry us into
 what he pleaseth? Yea, Men like our
 selves can easily work upon our Affec-
 tions, and prevail with us to do those
 things which will hasten our Misery, our
 Shame, our Destruction. But, alas!
 Christ may stand, and call, and warn,
 and entreat us by ever so many Consi-
 derations, and yet have no admittance
 amongst us. We deal with our Saviour,
 as the wanton and undutiful Child doth,
 when he lets an Enemy into the House
 at the first word. But when his Parent
 calls and knocks, he sits unconcerned,
 turns a deaf Ear, and never takes any
 notice, though that Relation knock ne-
 ver so loud, and be very importunate to
 be let in. We are ready to follow Sa-
 tan, and do what he would have us to
 do, if he do but promise us a little Plea-
 sure, or Wealth, &c. But Christ is
 shut out, and not hearkned unto, though
 he is most importunate, and doth urge
 the weightiest Arguments to prevail
 with us to attend unto him.

The

The Arguments he doth urge are very many : It shall suffice at present to name a few of them, with a brief intimation of their worth and excellency.

1. He lays before us his own transcendent Excellencies and Perfections. The Dignity of his Person, and how wonderful his Condescension is, in that he is pleased to make such Vouchsafements unto us. *He is the Brightness of the Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person ; and he upholdeth all things by the Word of his Power, Heb. 1. 3. He is God over all, blessed for ever-more, Rom. 9. 5.* And what ! shall the Eternal God be repulsed, when he makes such importunate Addresses to most miserable Worms ? Shall we deny admittance to the *high and lofty One who inhabiteth Eternity ; whose Name is Holy, and dwelleth in the high and holy Place ;* when he condescendeth to come to us, and earnestly entreateth us, to let him have his abode with us ? He is not a mean contemptible Person which maketh Love to us, whose Favour we may lose and be never the worse, whose Kindness and Love, if withdrawn, may be

be made up another way, or by another Person. He is God, He is the Lord of Glory: The Angels adore and reverence, glorify and worship him. He can and will make thee truly and unspeakably blessed and happy; if thou hearken to his Voice and entertain him. Thou must needs be unconceivably miserable without him; he has Power to make thee happy or miserable. If thou receive him, he will conduct thee to Heaven, and constitute thee perfect and unalterably blessed. But if thou stubbornly and finally despisest him, and trampest under thy Feet the offers of his Love and Grace, he is able to punish thee for thy contempt, and he will cast thee into, and burn thee in Hell to all Eternity.

2. He represents unto us the miserable and undone condition we are naturally in. That whilst without him, we are Aliens from the Common-wealth of *Israel*, we do not belong to the Society of those the Lord hath chosen and set apart for himself; we are Strangers from the Covenant of Promise, we have nothing to do with those great and precious Priviledges, which are made over

to them who are interested in the Divine special Love. We have no hope, we are in a desperate condition as to hereafter, without any true and solid ground to encourage our selves to hope it shall be well with us. We are without God in the World, we are destitute of true and sound Notions of God, and without an interest in him as our reconciled God, *Ephes. 2. 12.* Now, what have such Persons to be proud of? we *who are dead in Trespasses and Sins*, *Ephes. 2. 1.* What have we to be conceited of, that we should refuse to accept of Christ's Offers, that we should think scorn to entertain him? The discovery of our natural Estate, should make us hasten to the Lord Jesus with all the speed we can. But alas, it is our not being sensible of our Condition, our Infidelity, our not believing that we are so worthless, unclean, and miserable, as indeed we are, that makes us slight Christ, and refuse his gracious Offers.

3. He makes known how real and extraordinary his Love is to us. He does not complement us with words, but hath a Heart for us. O, what demonstrations of Love hath he given us?

He

He hath done as much to approve the sincerity of his Love to us, as can be desired or imagined. Sinner, there is no ground for thee to question the truth of his Love. He hath vindicated and cleared his sincerity beyond all possibility of suspicion and doubt. He pleads with the Sinner, protests his Love to him, and argues the matter with him. Behold, I have loved thee so long already with a transcendent Love ; And what is it thou wouldst or canst desire, to make it appear my Love is hearty and real ? Do'st thou expect I should approve my Love, by suffering some great hardships for thy sake ? Behold, I have done that, and more, I have been scorned and contemned, I have been abused and laugh'd at ; I have been derided, and mock'd, and spit upon ; nay, I have sweat Blood for thee, I have undergone inexpressible Agonies in my Mind, such troubles and griefs in my Soul, as no Tongue can explain, for thy sake. I have endured the frowns, and born the displeasure of an angry God, and incensed Father, to preserve and save thee. Here behold with thine own Eyes the Marks in my Hands, and in my Feet,

Feet, those Nails have made which fastned me to the Cross ! see the Scars on my Forehead, which were torn there by that Crown which was violently and reproachfully thrust on my Head ! Nay, I did lay down my Life for thee ! I waxed not weary in compassing thy Salvation, though the Pains and Sufferings I endured were very many, very grievous and afflicting. Death it self hath not quench'd nor conquered the Love I did bear unto thee. Now, who can resist the Arguings of a Saviour ! Do's Christ plead his Love and his Sufferings with thee ? do's he conjure thee, by them, to accept of him ? and wilt thou still stand out and reject him ? O, how stubborn, how invincible an Infidel, how vile and unpitiable a Wretch wilt thou prove thy self to be, if thou wilt not be moved by the entreaties and courtings of a bleeding Saviour !

4. He doth urge his Authority over us, and the right he hath unto us. I do not mean only that which doth accrue to him by Creation, or from our own particular promise and resignation of our selves unto him : But that right he hath to us by purchase. We are not our
own

own to dispose of; The Lord Jesus hath bought us out of the hands of our Enemies, and is become on that account our rightful Lord and Master. And how can we refuse him when he comes unto us, but we must contract on our selves the dreadful guilt of the most detestable Rebellion? rebellion against Heaven, against the Lord of Love, of Mercy, of Life! Our Hearts, our Souls, our Bodies, our whole Man, are purchased by him. He has redeemed us unto himself, he hath paid a sufficient price for us, and shall we shut the Doors against him, when he comes to dwell in his own House, the Habitation he himself hath purchased? Should a Servant keep any of us out of a House we have dearly bought, with what indignation should we resent such usage? And what may we expect from Christ, if we will detain his own purchase from him, and not admit him to have an abode with us? *1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. Luke 19. 27.*

It was a great Sin in the Jews, that they slighted and disowned Christ when he came amongst them. And their Sin was very much aggravated on this account, that they rejected him, notwithstanding

standing he had a peculiar and special right unto them, *John* 1. 11. O, what will our Sin appear to be, if after that Christ hath bought us with his most precious Blood, we will not accept of, and receive him when he knocks and pleads with us?

5. He acquaints us with the necessity of our admitting him into our Hearts, in order to our own happiness. What, shall we sin against our Lives and our Blessedness! Shall we cast away our Souls, and all that is justly dear to us, and have nothing to say for our selves in our own vindication and excuse? Is there any thing of prudence or of reason in doing thus? Doth not our Nature, doth not that Principle which differences us from Brutes, detest such a thing? Why, if we would not be such Prodigals, it highly concerns us to accept of Christ. He comes to us, and intreats us to accept of him for our own benefit. He cannot receive any advantage or profit by it; he doth not need us: It is for our good he comes to us; he importunes us thus, because, without accepting of him, we must be eternally ruined. We are in the way to
D Hell,

Hell, Satan and Lust are hurrying us apace to everlasting Misery, and we cannot be delivered and saved any other way than by accepting of him, *Acts 4. 12.*

6. He sets before us the Glory and Inheritance he hath provided for us, and will certainly bestow on us if we do receive him. The Things Christ hath treasured up for Believers, are not the little transitory Things of this World. These Things he casts abroad with a seemingly indifferent hand; he never designed to make up a Portion for his own People of these perishing Things. He hath greater and better Things to reward us with; even an *Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away, but is reserved for us in Heaven*, 1 Pet. 1. 4. He hath taken possession of glorious Mansions, and will come again and receive us unto himself, to be for ever where he is, *John 14. 2, 3.*

We have no ground to question our Saviour's Faithfulness or Bounty. It is alledged as a strong and convincing Argument, that God will not deny any useful thing unto his People, because he hath

hath given up his Son for them, *Rom. 8.*
 32. And can we imagine, that he who
 hath suffered for us, and triumphed
 over all our Enemies, and hath made
 such glorious Promises as are recorded
 in his Word, and doth still testify such
 strong Affection and Love towards us,
 will, if we accept of him, refuse to
 confer on us the great and the glorious
 Things he hath purchased for us by his
 bloody Sufferings? Our Blessed Savi-
 our, when he was on Earth, prayed that
 his Servants might be with him where
 he should be, *John 17. 24.* And he still
 intercedes now he is in Heaven for such,
 that they may be with him, and will
 certainly conduct them to, and possess
 them for ever of that Glory and Hap-
 piness which infinitely exceeds all Im-
 agination, and which is fully understood
 by no Creatures but those who do en-
 joy it. A Happiness which is absolute-
 ly free from all evil, and unpleasant
 Mixture, and which is every way com-
 plete, and full of every thing that is
 grateful, pleasant, and can administer
 any satisfaction: A Happiness that is
 stable, sure, and certain, which shall
 last to all Eternity, and never cease,
 D 2 decay,

decay, nor cloy, but always entertain with raptures of Joy, ravishing Pleasures and Satisfactions, which arise to uninterrupted and constant Extasies.

These are some of the Arguments which are strongly urged to prevail with Sinners to accept of Christ. But his Importunity will yet further appear, if we consider the Instruments he doth imploy and make use of about this Work. The Instruments are many, which are employ'd to entreat and perswade, and move Sinners to close with the gracious Tenders made them by the Son of God.

I will name but four.

1. The Holy Spirit is appointed to be Christ's Advocate, and is employ'd to plead Christ's Cause with Sinners. This Holy Spirit hath not only in a miraculous way convinc'd the World of Sin, of Righteousness, and of Judgment; but he doth plead often with particular Persons. Sometimes he works pious Inclinations and desires in the Soul; sometimes he affects with a penetrating apprehension of the wretchedness of a natural Estate. Sometimes he convinces powerfully of a necessity of looking after

ter Christ; sometimes he moves and perswades the Soul to close with Christ, and accept him upon his own terms. The Spirit of God works variously, secretly, and powerfully on the Heart; and doth often testify of Christ, even to those who do a long time, nay, it may be, finally stand out and refuse to close heartily with him.

But it is a great aggravation of a Person's Sin to grieve the Spirit of God, *Ephes. 4. 30.* and to quench the Spirit, *1 Theff. 5. 19.* To take no notice of Christ, but stubbornly oppose and resist him, when he comes to us, and pleads with us, and entreats us by his Spirit to accept of him.

O, to what a height doth our Guilt ascend, when Christ sends his Spirit to treat with us, and we despise, or take no notice of the workings and witnessings of this Holy Spirit! What a heightned Crime and Wickedness is this, to contemn and make light of Christ, after that the Holy Spirit hath been treating with us, and explaining to us, the Dignity of Christ, his unvaluable transcendent Excellencies, and the necessity of a Saviour!

This is certainly a very great proof and demonstration of our Saviour's earnestness to be admitted by us ; that he pleads with us by such an one, and employs his Holy Spirit to transact and manage this Business with us.

2. He sends his Ministers on this Errand. The Ministers of the Gospel are appointed to be the Preachers of Reconciliation unto the World. They are intrusted by the Lord Jesus to plead with Sinners, and endeavour to prevail with them to receive Christ, and yield up themselves to him. And therefore, as you hear, or refuse to hear them, so Christ interprets your readiness or unwillingness to receive him, *Luke 10. 16.*

The great Work and Business of the Ministry is, to beseech you, in the Name of Christ, to lay down your Enmity, which you have unjustly conceived against him, and hearken unto his wholsom saving Advice and Counsel, even to accept of him, that he may dwell with you, and you with him. *Now when we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us ; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God,*
2 Cor.

2 Cor. 5. 20. Now, how often, and with how much earnestness have you been entreated this way, to embrace Christ and his Gracious Offers ! Were not Christ very importunate for admittance, what need would there be, that a particular sort of People should be appointed and set apart for this very Business, to invite, and perswade, and intreat People to accept of Christ, and his Benefits ? *Ephes. 4. 11, &c.*

3. Jesus Christ doth importune you by his Word. When you read or hear the Holy Scriptures, what urgings and entreatings have you there from Christ to accept of him ! It is Peoples great Sin, that they slight the Scriptures, as they do Ministers and Ordinances, and are not willing to observe Christ speaking in them. But, O what a zeal and earnestness doth Christ manifest there, in beseeching and calling Sinners to embrace and accept of him ?

Consider and weigh these few Particulars, amongst the many you may meet with, in reading the Word of God ; which plainly shew how much Christ is

concerned for your closing with his gracious Tenders.

1. His free and solemn Invitations. What frank and liberal Promises doth he make to all who will but comply with his Call! *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest, Matth. 11. 28. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the Waters; and he that hath no Money, come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy Wine and Milk without Money and without Price. Wherefore do ye spend Money for that which is not-Bread? and your Labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your Soul delight it self in Fatness. Incline your Ear, and come unto me: hear, and your Soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure Mercies of David. Isa. 55. 1, 2, 3.* You see here, that he excepts none, and that he assures of the best, the most useful, the choicest, and most valuable Blessings.

2. His vehement and affectionate Protestations. He swears by Himself, that

that his Love is cordial and sincere. He importunes us often, and condescends to argue and expostulate with us. *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel? Ezek. 33. 11. Cast away from you all your Transgressions whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new Heart, and a new Spirit: for why will ye die, O House of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn your selves and live ye. Ezek. 18. 31, 32.*

3. His passionate Lamentation over those who do stubbornly reject him, and will not accept of him, notwithstanding he pleads with them thus earnestly. He wept over them of *Jerusalem*, after he had long importuned them in vain. How does he express, by groans and sighs, his mournful sorrowful Resentments, on the account of the destruction they were wilfully drawing on themselves? *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them*
D 5 *which*

which are sent unto thee ; how often would I have gathered thy Children together, even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not ? Matth. 23. 37.

4. Christ doth importune us for admittance by every Mercy and Judgment. How often are we brought to some sense of our need of Christ, and to some kind of resolutions to yield and open to him, by the straights, and exigencies, and sufferings we are involved in ? though it is our very great Fault, that we are apt to forget all, as soon as our pain is over : But what is the true end of every Affliction, but to make us see more of the Excellencies of Christ, and to endear him unto our Souls ? O happy Sufferings ! might they all have such an influence on us !

And what is the end of all God's Mercies, but to lead us to Repentance, and bring us to Christ ? Why are you thus long preserved out of Hell ? Why are you not at this time tormented and frying in eternal Burnings ? Is any reason to be assigned why you should enjoy the Gospel, yea, the common Mercies.

cies of your Lives, but only this, that Christ is still waiting to be gracious to you, and that by these means he is inviting and importuning you to accept of him, and fly from that Damnation which doth not slumber, but is hastning apace upon the whole World of ungodly Sinners? God could as easily have dismissed you to the Regions of Darkness, the Places of most dreadful and insupportable Horror, many Years ago, as any others who are now in Torments. All the Mercies, and all the time you have had in the World, were the Fruits of Christ's Love, Testimonies of his Patience, and Instances of his pleading with you to accept of him, and not ruin and undo your selves.

How small a thing would it be, for Christ to send thee to Hell? to say unto thee, Go thou cursed? Alas, one frown from him would immediately sink thee into the Earth, into the bottomless Pit! And what is it that preserves thee, but the tenderness of thy Saviour? And for what end doth he express so much regard unto thee, but to try whether his Patience and Lenity, and his allowing thee so much time, strength, and

and so many Mercies, will prevail with thee to prize and receive thy Saviour !

II. I am now in the second place to shew you, what our receiving Christ into our Hearts doth import.

But before I speak positively to this, I will take notice of two or three things, with which People do too commonly falsely please, and satisfy, and consequently deceive themselves. We should observe these, as Mariners do the Rocks and Shelves where others have suffered Shipwrack before them.

I. This receiving Christ, doth not consist in a bare notional knowledg of him. A Man may, by common instruction, and ordinary diligence and study, acquire from the Holy Scriptures such Notions concerning Christ, as Men do usually obtain by study and diligence in any Point of Philosophy. But this is only such a knowledg as doth float in the Head, and may be in that Person who hath not any love and affection to Christ : Such may have a knowledg of Christ, so as to give a plain account of the

the common sense, or ancient use of the Words, wherein the Doctrines concerning Christ are communicated and conveyed unto People. They may give an account of the Grammatical meaning and sense of the words, as well as any others ; and yet these People may not entertain Christ. They may not understand, nor cannot dive into the Spiritual meaning of those Doctrines, 1 Cor. 2. 14. *Julian* knew a great deal concerning Christ, and so did *Celsus*, but they were great Enemies to Christ.

“ The only Principle which enableth
 “ a Man for the right judging and dis-
 “ cerning of Heavenly Things, is the
 “ Grace of God’s Spirit, which the na-
 “ tural Man wanteth ; and hence it fol-
 “ loweth, that as a Man cannot live
 “ without a Soul, nor see without an
 “ Eye, nor hear without an Ear, be-
 “ cause these are the Grounds and Prin-
 “ ciples from which Life, and Sight, and
 “ Hearing do flow : So no Man can
 “ know and serve God aright, without
 “ God’s Spirit enlightning and ena-
 “ bling him by his Grace, because this
 “ is the Principle from which all both
 “ spiri-

"spiritual Actions and Abilities do
 "spring. *Mason of Hearing and Do-*
ing, p. 328.

2. It doth not consist in an outward
 professing to own the Faith of Christ.
 Alas ! how many make a general Pro-
 fession of Christianity, and of embracing
 the particular Doctrines of the Gospel,
 who take no care to depart from Iniqui-
 ty ! The very Devils have made as ho-
 nourable a Profession of Christ's being
 the Son of God, as any meer words we
 can devise will amount unto, *Luke 4*
41.

3. It doth not consist in a bare per-
 formance of some Duties, in the Name
 of Christ. Performing Duties in the
 Name of Christ, and speaking honour-
 ably and much of Christ, are very
 good and commendable, when they pro-
 ceed from a right Principle, and spring
 from a real and very ardent Affection
 to Christ. But we must take heed lest
 we content our selves with these things,
 whilst they may have a false Original,
 or are used to improper Ends. How-
 ever, we must be sure we do not stay
 here, without proceeding further. Peo-
 ple have used the Name of Christ to
 very,

very ill purposes, *Acts* 19. 13. Many pretend to perform Duties with earnestness, in his Name, for whom he hath no respect, and who did never truly bid him welcome into their Hearts, *Mat.* 7. 22, 23.

Indeed, where Christ is received aright, there will be all these things in some degree and measure, but these will not be all which will be there. There must be some knowledg of Christ, tho not that which doth only soar aloft in the Head, and evaporate, and manifest it self only at the Mouth; but such as will influence the Heart and Life. Many who receive Christ aright, may not be able to express and discover their knowledg to others in such apposite, free, and voluble Expressions, as some others can, who have nothing of the true Spiritual sense of Divine Truths, or the saving Knowledge of Christ. The one sort are more beholden to their natural or acquired Abilities, the other to the inward and effectual workings of the Holy Spirit. Every Person who hath a true sense, and firm perswasion of Spiritual Matters, hath not the Gift of Elocution. There is no necessary a true and

and sound Believer should be eloquent, or have a voluble Tongue. Much Knowledge, and Memory, and Utterance, and lively Affection, (as a worthy reverend Person hath said) are all very desirable; but you must judge your Estate by none of those, for they are all uncertain.

And who-ever truly receives Christ, will acknowledge and profess his owning of Christ. For as Men *believe with the Heart, so with the Mouth confession is made unto Salvation*, Rom. 10. 10.

But now I come to speak more positively to this Point. Our receiving of Christ is expressed in my Text by these words; *If any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door.* So that two things are required to, and imported, by our receiving of Christ, according to the express Letter of the Text;

- 1st, Hearing his Voice.
- 2^{dly}, Opening unto him.

But before I speak particularly to these things, let me observe to you, from the general indefinite Expression here used; That Jesus Christ doth not exclude any one Person from enjoying Him,

Him, and the Benefits of his Death and gracious Presence, provided he will but comply with Him, and accept of his gracious Offers. He is willing to come to, and dwell with any Person who will but hearken to his Voice, and give Him admittance. He will not refuse you for any personal unworthiness, or because you have been very grievous and notorious Transgressors. *He would have all Men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the Truth, 1 Tim. 2. 4.* He invites all without exception, *Isa. 55. 1, 2. If any Man hear my Voice;* any Man, though ever so poor or miserable in the Eye of the World; nay, notwithstanding he hath been ever so violent and fierce against me, though his Sins be never so many, never so great, never so hainous, yet if he will but hear my Voice, obey my Call, and open unto me, I will accept of him, I will be his Guest, and impart unto him my Self, my Merits, and the Comforts, Satisfaction, and Benefits arising therefrom. We have very signal Evidences of this in the Holy Scriptures. *Peter* after his most detestable denial of Christ, is received into Favour. *Paul*, though he had

had been such an outrageous Persecutor, findeth Mercy, and is made a most excellent and useful Apostle.

The general Doctrine of the Scripture doth confirm this Truth, That Christ is ready and willing to communicate Himself, and the Benefits of his Death and Passion, to any that will accept of him. Christ hath put no Bar, no Impediment, no Hindrance in any Man's way. If we do not accept of Him, if we reap not the Benefits of his Death, the fault is our own, even because we would not receive Him when he came unto us, and entreated for admittance. He comes to, and seeks after the most unworthy, *Mark 2. 17.* He came to save Sinners, *1 Tim. 1. 15.* He came to seek and to save the Lost. He excepts none, if they renounce their Wickednesses and Sins, *Isa. 55. 7.*

The Terms he proposeth to us, in order to our reaping all this Advantage, are but hearing his Voice, and opening the Door.

1st, Hearing his Voice. This imports two things.

1. At-

1. Attending to, and taking notice of those Arguments he doth urge to obtain admittance. I have given you before a short account of these Arguments. But this instructs us, that an heedful attentive frame of Spirit, is ordinarily requisite to a due receiving of Christ into our Hearts. An unruly froward temper, that is impatient of Spiritual Advice, Instruction, Reproof, &c. and fumes and chafes on all such occasions, and applies to any sort of courses to divert from serious considerations, is a very dangerous and unhappy Temper.

But this is not all that hearing Christ's Voice doth import. People may attend to Matters of this nature, and design no more than to obtain some embellishments in their Discourse; or they may have some design not truly useful and commendable. Indeed, God may make his Word to fasten, and prove effectual to those who have none of the best purposes in hearkning to the Word of Christ; and therefore I dare not discourage any Man absolutely from attending, whatever he may propose to himself in so doing, because the Word
may

may take hold of him beyond expectation.

Mr. *Bilney* reports of himself, that he bought and read the New Testament, not because it was the Word of God, but because *Erasmus* had translated it into excellent Latin; yet it pleased God, when he read *1 Tim. 1. 15.* that his Mind was particularly fixed on those words; so that God made them effectual for his Conversion and Reformation.

But such Instances are something out of the usual and common road; therefore we have reason to conclude, that hearkning to the Voice of Christ, doth note something more than bare attendance to his Voice.

2. It doth note the Influence the Arguments our Saviour doth use, have on our Affections and Hearts. Attention is a very useful Expedient for the making of those things which are proposed unto us, to have some efficacy on us. When we diligently attend to any thing that is spoken, we have Impressions ordinarily made on our Minds, which bear some proportion with what hath been discoursed. And this seems to be imported here by hearing Christ's Voice; those

those Impressions, which the serious considering what he hath propos'd, occasion to be fastned on our Hearts and Minds, the Affections and Dispositions of Soul, which do result from our hearkning to his Voice. Which is something betwixt bare hearing his Voice, and opening unto him. It is the Result, Fruit, and Consequent of the former, and a good and proper Preparative to the latter.

2^{dly}, Opening the Door. This is the other Expression in the Text, to note our receiving of Christ. And it doth import our compliance with him, our free and sincere resignation of our selves unto him. As a Person, who being in an House, when another who is the right owner of it, comes and knocks at the Door, and declares to the Party within his claim to that House, and makes it appear he is the true owner of that House, and has Authority to require the Possession to be delivered up unto him; the Party within hearkning to what he hath to say, and being convinced, and fully satisfied of his Right and Authority to make that Demand, he

he opens the Door to him, and admits him into the House ; not only in point of common civility, but so as owning his Propriety, and delivering up the Possession to him. Thus opening to Christ, doth note our giving up our Hearts to him, and owning him for the only, true, lawful Sovereign, Owner, and Governour of them. Our receiving Christ is not right, till we arrive at this Point, People may give attendance to Christ's Voice, and have their Affections and Hearts in some measure moved and influenced by the same, and yet Corruption may prevail and keep them from resigning up the Possession to him. Nay, it falls out too often thus with the truly Godly, that they do not immediately, upon some affection and sence begot in them, upon their hearing the Voice of their Saviour, resign up themselves, and comply with his Demands as they should. The Spouse, *Cant.* 5. 2, 4, &c. heard the Voice of her Beloved ; she knew it to be his Voice, and seemed to attend to what he said, *vers.* 2. And though she made several Excuses, yet we may easily perceive his Voice had some influence on her. *Ver. 4. My Bowels were moved for*

for him.' Yet notwithstanding all this, she did not open unto him. He was provoked to withdraw, and went his way, *vers. 6.*

But I will not confine my self strictly to a minute enquiry into the extent of these Phrases used in the Text. I shall give you my sense of what our receiving Christ doth import, in a few Particulars, where you will have the Substance of what is contained in, or implied by these Expressions in the Text.

1. Our receiving of Christ, doth imply our having a deep and affectionate sense of the Danger, Evil, and Filth of Sin, and in what an undone condition we are naturally. We are not fit to receive Christ into our Hearts, till we have an entire, hearty, and invincible detestation and abhorrence of Sin, which is so contrary to Christ, settled in our Souls. We cannot prize and value Christ aright, till we are sensible how hateful and destructive Sin is. Christ and Sin cannot reign together, nay, they cannot amicably lodg together in the same Soul. We cannot serve God and *Mammon*. If we do not see our selves lost and undone without Christ, we cannot bid him
truly

truly welcome. The Physician is not look'd after, nor regarded, till we perceive our Distemper, and are sensible how weak and uneasy it makes us, *Mat.* 9. 12. *Paul* sees himself the greatest Sinner, before he observes and takes comfort in the loveliness of Christ, *1 Tim.* 1. 15. Those whom Christ calls and encourageth to come to him, are they who are pressed and grieved with the weight and burthen of their Sins, *Mat.* 11. 28.

Now, do you try and examine yourselves, whether you are duly affected with the evil and filth of Sin, with your deplorable and lost Estate whilst out of Christ? Do you really think that there is nothing in the World near so pernicious, evil, and hateful, as Sin? Is Sin more hateful to you than Hell? Can you truly chuse the greatest Suffering and Misery, rather than commit the least Sin knowingly against God and Christ? Are you brought to this Point, to say in sincerity, All for Christ? Hast thou such a sense of Sin, as makes thee cry out in holy Resignation; Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? What shall I do to be saved?

2. Our

2. Our receiving of Christ, doth import a firm belief of his Divinity, and the alſufficiency of his Merits and Satisfaction. A ſinful Creature, who is loſt and undone in himſelf, and apprehends his own Eſtate, would catch at every thing, but knows not where to fix, till he be indued with a truly Divine Faith, and thereby has his Mind thoroughly ſatiſfied, that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the only begotten Son of God, is appointed by the Father, to be *a Propitiation for the Sins of the World*; and that he having obeyed and ſuffered, according to the Agreement betwixt Him and the Father, is alſufficient for the ſaving of all thoſe who do believingly cloſe with him. A meer cuſtomy aſſent to what is ſaid of Chriſt in Scripture, will not ſerve our turn. Satan will eaſily baffle and overcome ſuch a Faith. It muſt be ſuch an inward aſſent and conſent, as carries all the Powers of the Soul along with them; ſuch a Faith as is impregnated and confirmed in us by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt. The Heart muſt be firmly perſwaded of Chriſt's being the Son of God; that he hath made full ſatisfaction

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to God's Justice, and that in him there is a compleat and absolute fulness for us, *Heb. 7. 25.*

Do you therefore examine your selves concerning your present Estate, and enquire whether you have a sure and firm Belief wrought in you, that Christ is God, and that he is a compleat and perfect Saviour, that *in him dwelleth all Fulness*; and that notwithstanding your own personal unworthiness, yet you may and shall, if you believingly and obediently depend on him, be accepted, for his Merits and Worthiness? I do not speak of a superficial Assent, a meer notional Belief, but such a Faith as is a living active Principle in us, which undermines and supplants our Lusts, and mortifieth them daily in us, and puts us with vigor and earnestness on all Acts of Holy Obedience, and faithfully endeavour to please God. Are you firmly perswaded, on Scripture-Grounds, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; *That there is no other Name given under Heaven, by which you can be saved*; and that in him there is such a redundancy, that *of his Fulness you may receive Grace for Grace*?

3. Our

3. Our receiving Christ doth import, our laying on him the great and only stress of our Salvation ; our looking up to him, and depending on him alone for Pardon, Life, and Happiness. If we will receive Christ, we must deny, not only our sinful worldly Lusts, but we must deny our selves, as to our best and most religious Duties, Works, and Performances. We must not desist from, and break off from these Performances, but we must deny them, so as not to depend and rely on them, as if by the Worthiness and Merit of these, we could purchase Life and Salvation to our selves. Though it is our duty to work and labour in the Service of God, with such earnestness and diligence, as if we were to get Heaven by our own pains ; yet when we have done all, we must rely wholly on the Satisfaction, Righteousness, and Merits of Christ. A true Believer will have his Eye on Christ, when at Duty, to engage his Fervency and Diligence ; and after he hath done all he can, he will rely only upon him for acceptance. When we have done all we can, we must acknowledge our selves *unprofitable Servants*, Luk. 17. 10.

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Now,

Now, hast thou learn'd to deny thy self? Do'st thou not please thy self, that because thou art not as prophane and loose as many others are, that for this cause thou shalt be accepted and saved? Alas, bare Morality will lodg People far short of Heaven. Do'st thou not conclude thy Condition good and safe enough, because thou prayest often, reade'st the Scriptures, hearest the Word preached, and partake'st of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as occasion offereth? Alas, if thou relie'st on these things, thou wilt find thy self but in the state of Hypocrites, and of those spoken of in *Mat. 7. 21, 22, 23.*

Do'st thou not think thou must needs go to Heaven, for thy pious Services, thy good Works, and thy Charity in relieving the Poor? If so, read what the Apostle saith, *1 Cor. 13. 1, 2, 3.* He that receiveth Christ into his Heart, goes wholly out of himself to Christ. He lays no stress on any thing he can do. He labours after the greatest conformity he can attain to, the Will of God, and doth this out of obedience to God; but when he hath prayed with the greatest fervency he can, and hath expressed
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the greatest Zeal for God and Religion he can reach unto ; when he hath done all within his Power, he renounces all thoughts of Merit in himself, and flies only to Christ for favour and acceptance. He is sensible of his own Imperfections and Infirmities, and cries out against himself, *Unclean, unclean ! my best Righteousnesses are but as filthy Rags ; I am but an unprofitable Servant.* He hastneth to Christ to undertake for him ; and cries out, Blessed Jesus, let thy Merits and Satisfaction obtain acceptance and favour for me. Lord, I throw myself into the Arms of thy Grace ; O, reject me not, but grant I may be found in thee, and may have thy Righteousness to commend me.

4. Our receiving Christ doth note, our complying with his Terms. Most would be willing to be saved at last, provided they might have liberty to live as they list at present. But Christ must be accepted on his own Terms ; He calls us to Repentance, Faith, and new Obedience. If we will conclude on good ground, that we have received Christ, we must see to it, that we sincerely forsake our former Lusts and Sins, which

so long separated betwixt us and our God, and for which Christ did undergo and suffer such pressing and astonishing Sorrows and Punishments. *Let the Wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, &c. Isa. 55.* 7. We must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that he is the Son of God ; that out of pure Love he did assume our Nature ; that he hath performed all that is necessary to put us into a capacity of Salvation, and to reconcile us unto God, that he is the only Author of Eternal Life and Salvation. And we must rely and depend upon him only for Mercy and Salvation. We must devote ourselves to live godly, righteously, and soberly, and make Conscience of attending to, and walking in all Christ's Commandments. And we must take care to get all this cleared and evidenced to our selves from Scripture-Grounds.

Art thou truly willing to part with all thy Lust ! to mortify thy corrupt Affections, and to die every day more and more to sin ! to be crucified to the World, and to oppose and resist all that fights against thy Soul ? Do'st thou labour

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bour to exercise Faith vigorously ? is it thy Business to eye Christ continually ? do'st thou fetch all thy Strength and Supplies from Him ? are all thy Hopes and Expectations laid up in him ? do'st thou, without any reservation, give up thy self to Christ ! is it thy heartiest desire, study, care, and endeavour, continually to imitate and please Christ ?

5. Our receiving Christ doth import, our submitting to him in all his Relations. It was a great Reflection on some who followed Christ, when he was here upon Earth, that they *followed him for the Loaves with which he fed them, and not for the Miracles which they saw him work*; whereby his Divinity was attested, and the Truth of the Doctrines he taught, undeniably evidenced and confirmed. And it would be as severe a Reflection upon us, should Christ lay it to our Charge, that though we pretend to submit to Him in one Relation, yet we refuse to own and acknowledg Him in his other Relations. That we are willing to admit him to be our Priest, to suffer for us, but will not have any thing to do with his Yoke, but do resolutely cast his Laws behind our back,

and determine that we will not have him to reign over us.

But it is our Duty to be ready and willing, for his sake, to take up the Cross, as well as to wear the Crown ; to submit to do his Work, as well as to expect and receive the Recompences and Wages he doth bestow. We must take him as our King, as our Husband, as our Lord, and as our Owner, and perform to him all those Duties which concern us, as we are his Subjects, his Spouse, his Servants and People, in whom he hath an undeniable property.

We should complain to Christ of our hard and inflexible Hearts, our unruly and tumultuous Affections, of those Lusts and Wickednesses which we find strongest in us, we should be earnest with him in desiring his powerful governing Presence in and with us, that our Lusts may be conquered, our Affections tamed, made moderate and sanctified ; and that our stubborn Hearts may be made soft and pliable.

We must take him for our Priest, expecting nothing but Wrath, as what is due to what we can do of our selves,
and

and therefore relying wholly on Christ. We must not look for any Pardon, but what Christ's Blood hath purchased, nor any fellowship and communion with God, but what Christ doth by his intercession obtain for us.

We must take him for our Prophet, to teach, direct, and guide us, and to advise and counsel us. We are naturally ignorant of God, and our selves, and the things which most of all concern us; and we cannot get a sound and perfect knowledg of them, but by his instruction, who is the great Revealer of them, even Jesus Christ as Prophet. Those who will receive Christ aright, must learn to know and understand his Voice and Dialect, that whensoever they hear it, they may *follow him*, John 10. 4. Christ is *the Truth, the Way, and the Life*; and there is no coming to, or knowing of the Father, but by him, John 14. 6. We must take him for our great Teacher; we must be willing to learn whatever he shall instruct us in, and embrace and receive every direction he shall give us.

Consider therefore with your selves, whether it be thus with you: Whether

you have sincerely given up your selves to his Government, do willingly submit to his Laws, do chearfully consent that he should rule over you? Do you depend only on his Sacrifice and Merits? and do you rejoice in his Light? Do you receive him as a Master, a Father, a Brother, a Friend? &c. And do you demean your selves to him in all the Duties and Offices of your Relations, as by the Obligations arising from such Relations, you are bound unto? *Mal.* 1. 6.

6. Our receiving Christ into our Hearts, doth import our having a transcendent and extraordinary love for Christ. No Man is worthy to follow Christ, or be owned by him, that cannot deny himself, and take up his Cross for his sake. Christ will not take up his abode in that Heart, which is not entirely given up and resigned to him. Our loving other things, either with an equal or a greater Love than what we have for Christ, renders us wholly unfit to enjoy him, and deprives us of those special Communications he would otherwise vouchsafe unto us. When Christ comes to us, and calls for admittance,

tance, he comes not like a Stranger to stay for a little while, but as a Friend, nay an Owner, to take up his fixed residence, and make his constant abode with us. A little outward Ceremony, and common Courtesy, doth suffice for the entertainment of such as make Visits accidentally, or for whom there is no very great respect. But Love is necessary, that there may be a personal constant abode, and a mutual friendly converse together. Christ must have our whole Hearts, he cannot endure a Rival. If we love other things, it must be for his sake, and in subordination to him, or else this will exclude him, and evidence that we refuse to receive him.

Call your selves now to an account, and see whether your Hearts are free, and disengaged from all other things; or whether you are willing to receive Christ, according to this sense of the Phrase. Can you say, in sincerity, Blessed Jesus, my only and most beloved Saviour, here is my whole Heart, I resign it entirely unto thee? I desire no greater, nor no other happiness, than that thou wilt be pleased to make it thy
Temple,

Temple, the place of thy gracious Residence : It is my earnest request, and shall be my diligent endeavour, to have it cleansed and made pure, from every Affection and Inclination, which is any way contrary to thy Purity and Holiness. O, do thou be pleased to give in thy assistance ! dispose and prepare my Soul to thy own mind ! and, blessed Lord, take full possession of me, dwell in my Heart, and rule over my whole Man ! Canst thou truly say ; Lord, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee ? and there is none upon Earth I desire besides thee*, Psal. 73. 25. Do'st thou not desire to know any thing *but Jesus Christ and him crucified ?* 1 Cor. 2. 2. Do'st thou love Christ more than all the World ? more than all thy Relations ? more than all those things which are commonly esteemed the great Endearments of this World, yea, more than Life it self ? *Luke 14. 26.* Jesus Christ is very precious unto them who believe, *1 Pet. 2. 7.* Now, canst thou, for the sake of Christ, deny thy Lusts, thy Self, thy best and most religious Performances ? Canst thou live for Christ, and canst thou suffer, yea, die for Christ ?

Christ? and is Christ above all in thy Heart?

Thus you have some little account what kind of reception it is the Lord Jesus doth call for, or what our receiving Christ doth import. It would be too great a digression here, to insist on such Considerations as are proper to evince it to be our Interest, and that we are under indispenfible Obligations to yield up our selves in this manner unto him. Much might be said to this purpose, from the Excellencies of our Saviour, how precious he is in himself, how wonderful in his Condescension unto us, and what unvaluable Benefits and Advantages do accrue unto Believers from Christ, &c. But having on other Occasions discoursed of these Matters more distinctly, I wave the consideration of them now, hastning to what I promised to take notice of in the third place: Only by the way we may observe, there is not any thing impli'd in what I have said concerning our receiving of Christ, which can in the least countenance our refusal, or justly discourage us from complying with his Calls and Entreaties.

And

And what shall the Eternal God, our only Saviour, importune us with all earnestness, and we harden our selves against him, resist and reject him ! in doing so, we shall be uncivil, ungrateful, to the highest degree impious against God, inhumane and barbarous to our power against Christ, and actually so to our own Souls ; we shall be guilty of all that's Evil, of all that can deserve an hateful, an ignominious, reproachful Name.

Indeed, if Mens ordinary practices did not fully and undeniably evidence, that they have no real value for Christ, and that they do stubbornly refuse to close with his Calls, we might, when meditating on this Subject, be very apt to imagine and conclude, that none could be so undutiful, or so forgetful of themselves, or so foolish, so distractedly fond and ambitious of Damnation, as to purchase it, by a stubborn hardening themselves against the powerful affectionate perswasions of the Son of God, and a contemptuous despitel throwing the gracious Offers, the very Blood and tenderest Mercies of a loving, compassionate, Divine Saviour, back into his own Face.

But

But alas ! People every where, give too many and too frequent Demonstrations, in the course of their Lives, of their disaffection to Christ, and how little influence his Love hath on them. For this is certain, where Jesus Christ doth reside by his gracious Presence, there will be a vigorous and active Principle of Grace and Holiness, which will manifest it self in the outward Conversation. When Christ is received into the Heart, doth settle his Abode there, and doth command and govern there, that Person with whom it is thus, will be possessed with such a lively working Principle of Purity, Righteousness, and Goodness, as will have a most powerful influence on all the parts of his Life.

It is indeed a very deplorable thing, that amongst so many pretenders to Christianity, with which the World doth abound, is even throng'd and crowded, there should be so few who give any serious, real attendance to the Voice of Christ, who give any tolerable discovery, that they have opened their Hearts to receive him.

III. Let

III. Let us now therefore, in the third place, enquire after some of those lets and hindrances, which keep our Hearts shut against Christ. Many might be mentioned, but I will only take a brief notice of these few.

I. Carnal Pride, and Spiritual Self-conceitedness. People are generally very unwilling to believe their condition so bad and helpless as naturally it is. It goes against Mens Spirits and Stomachs, to think so meanly of themselves, as not to be able to do any thing to recover, secure, and save themselves. They would fain find some prop or other in themselves to lean upon. Indeed they would be their own Physicians, and their own Saviours; and are very difficultly driven out of their carnal selfish Confidence. They will either please themselves with an opinion that they have no Wound; or if they must own that, they will find a Plaister for it at Home, they cannot in this case endure to go abroad for help. Corrupt Nature is very proud; we are hardly brought to deny our Selves, and to think so meanly of our Selves, our Works, our Performances,

manes, our religious Duties, as to be willing to be saved purely by free Grace. We would fain have some share in this great Work our selves, we would have our own Wings to carry us to Heaven ; At least, we would have our own Works, and Religious Performances, to have some portion of the Glory. Men would be contented to have Christ's Hand and Arm to help them out of the Ditch, provided they may come out with some credit ; that though there was a fall, and some dirt in the case, yet vigor and strength continued, and they were able, with a very little help, to recover themselves. Their Power (as they will have it) was sufficient, they only wanted a Staff or Cord to hold by, that so they might exert that ability and strength they had in themselves.

As Pride did at first put Man upon aspiring to be as God, so now it doth tempt him to usurp the Honour belonging to the Son of God. Man would be his own Saviour, yea, his own God. He cannot endure to stoop, to drink of the Waters of Life. But as God and *Mammon*, Light and Darknes, so Christ and

and carnal proud Self cannot dwell and agree together.

When the Gospel was first preached about in the World, it was pride and selfishness which did most oppose it, and resist Christ, *Rom. 10. 3.* They were all for establishing their own Righteousness. When the Christian Religion was first recovered from the Superstitions and Darkneses which had long overspread it, the Reformation began in rectifying Mens Judgments and Minds about this Matter, of the insufficiency of our own Works, and the absolute necessity of the Righteousness and Merits of Jesus Christ.

The *high and lofty God*, will dwell with none but those *who are of humble and contrite Spirits*, *Isa. 57. 15.* As long as we please our selves with fancying we have no need of Christ, we have a sufficiency in our selves, and can do well enough without him, we shall never attend with due care to his Voice, nor faithfully receive him into our Hearts. We are apt to think our selves *rich and increased with Goods*, and that we have no need of any thing without us, and are

are very difficultly perswaded, that we *are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,* and therefore we slight Christ, and shut him out of our Hearts, *Rev. 3. 17.* There is no room for Christ, in a proud self-conceited Heart.

2. Infidelity or Unbelief, doth keep the Heart shut against Christ. Herein consists our non-acceptance of Christ. Notwithstanding the Lord Jesus hath so many Witnesses, and explains himself to us so fully, yet do we slight and reject him: And whence is all this, but from our not diligently attending to his Instruction, nor understanding and conceiving aright of what he doth propose to us; not weighing and considering seriously the Evidence of things recommended to us; not truly and really assenting to the Truths of Christ? People content themselves with empty Notions, and a fashionable Profession, without any real, firm perswasion of the Particulars they pretend to own. Did we really and firmly assent to, or believe the Doctrines concerning Christ, his Person, Natures, Offices, Promises, Laws,

Laws, &c. contained in the New Testament, we should be thereby influenced to a holy, faithful, entire recumbency of Soul on Christ, and to a vigorous active conformity to his Laws, and following of his Example. If there be no difference betwixt us, and Turks or Heathens, but only that we call our selves by another Name, and in word pretend to another Religion, we do not really believe : For Faith, if real, will influence our Affections and Lives, proportionably to the Degree of our Assent, the Nature and Tendency of the Truths we do believe, and the Sense we have of our concernment in them.

It is the great Fault of People pretending to Religion, and enjoying means of Instruction, that they do not take a becoming care to get their Minds possessed with right and sound Notions of the Truths and Doctrines they profess to own. They do not consider what Grounds and Evidences they have, for their yielding assent to the Doctrines they profess; they do not labour and endeavour, and strive to get the Characters of Divine Truths deeply imprinted with their full Light and Power
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on their Hearts. And how can it otherwise be expected then, but that multitudes should prove meer Hypocrites and Formalists? It is Unbelief that blinds our Minds, that we see no beauty or loveliness in Christ; it is this that turns away our Hearts from Christ, renders us incapable of receiving any saving benefit from Christ, which hardens and sears our Consciences, makes them unsensible, and locks and bolts our Hearts against Christ. See *Isa.* 53. 2, 3. *Heb.* 3. 12. *John* 1. 11, 12. *Mat.* 13. 58. *Rom.* 11. 20, 22, 23.

3. Worldly-mindedness keeps the Heart shut against Christ. When we expect too much from the World, and these lower Enjoyments, do set our Hearts excessively on them, press after, pursue and seek for earthly Things, with too much vehemence and earnestness, we, of course, grow unmindful of, and unconcerned for Christ and our Souls, Heaven and Spiritual Matters. The Things of the World do devour our Strength, and drink up all our Spirits: yea, they beget in us, not only a regardlessness of Spiritual Things, but a contempt

tempt of, and opposition against them. *Know ye not, that the Friendship of the World is Enmity with God: whoſoever therefore will be a Friend of the World, is the Enemy of God,* Jam. 4. 4. ſee 1 John 2. 15. Alas ! when Mens Hearts are ſet upon the World, what will they not venture for it ? They venture Chriſt, and Heaven, and Soul, and all that is truly precious. This worldly-mindedneſs, makes the Word and Truths of Chriſt to be of no eſteem and value with us, this makes them of no uſe to us, makes us that we reap no benefit from them, *Matth.* 13. 22. How many who have made a fair ſhew in the Fleſh, have ſeemed to make fair Offers for Chriſt, have fallen off as ſoon as ever they have been tried as to this Point ! ſee *Matth.* 19. 22. The love of this preſent World, choak'd and deſtroy'd *Demas*, 2 Tim. 4. 10. What a curſed influence had the love of the World on *Judas*, when he adventured on that villanous piece of Treachery, to betray and ſell his Lord and Maſter, the Son of God, for thirty pieces of Silver !

4. Love

4. Love of carnal sensual Pleasures.

We read of some who are *lovers of Pleasures more than lovers of God*, 2 Tim.

3. 4. Of some who make their Belly their God, *Phil.* 3. 19. Now, such as have devoted themselves to their Lusts, and are wholly enslaved to their Pleasures and sensual Delights, are wholly indispos'd and unfit to bid Christ welcome. There must be a great change wrought in them, before they can receive and entertain Christ. It is not meet to bring a Person of Honour and Quality into a Room that is full of Vomit and loathsome filthiness and stench: Such a Person will not be entertained and treated in a Swine-stye: and the Heart of him that wallows in his sinful Pleasures is no better. That Soul where Christ will dwell, must be cleansed from all those *fleshly Lusts which war against the Soul*, Rom. 13. 14. And as such a Heart is very unfit for Christ, so there is much malignity in it against Christ. Who greater Enemies to Christ, and who so bitter against his Ways, his Laws, his Word, his Government, than those who do wholly addict themselves
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to the sensual gratifying of all their carnal Appetites, Desires, and Inclinations ! If they may not enjoy their swinish Lusts, without any molestation and reproof from Christ and his Word, they will either, with the *Gadarens*, desire them to be gone, or else more rudely attempt to thrust and force them out of their Quarters.

5. Cherishing any particular Lust or Sin in our Hearts, and suffering it to have a predominant reigning Power over us. Though we seem to reject and cast from us many of our former Vices, and to deny our selves in several Instances, in which we did before allow our selves a greater liberty, yet if we yield up our selves Subjects to any one Sin, though we do it never so cunningly and secretly, we do thereby bid Christ defiance, and renounce his Rule and Government over us. If a Man make his Addresses to one he desires to have a conjugal friendship and familiarity with ; if that Party have preingaged her self faithfully to another Person, this is a more effectual Impediment to his admission, than if he had a multitude of Rivals.

Rivals. If we cherish any one Lust in our Bosom, and suffer it to rule there, it will as certainly keep Christ out of our Hearts, as if we did allow our selves in a greater number of Sins. If we were only haunted by Sin, beleaguer'd and set upon, courted and solicited, though by hundreds of Lusts, the case would not be desperate; we might, it may be, sooner listen to Christ, than to any of them: but when we close with any Lust, submit our selves to its Power, take it into our Heart, and enthroned and crown it there, chusing and preferring it before Christ, then is our case dangerous indeed, though we seem to reject and offer some indignity to those other Lusts and Vices that were suing for entertainment, but did not suit so well with our Humor and Fancy, as that did which we have surrendered our selves unto.

Too many do pretend to receive Christ, and yet exclude him this way. They are described, *Zeph. i. 38* That swear by the Lord, and that swear by Malcham; that is, they profess friendship, and subjection, and obedience unto
 F God;

God; and bind themselves herunto, by the strongest ties that can be devised, swearing to be true and faithful to him alone, and yet under-hand they swear to *Malcham*; i. e. they swear in the same manner, and devote themselves by Oath to be true to *Moloch*. Take heed you do not entertain, indulge, or set up any Lust in your Hearts, though never so privately, for if you do, this will keep Christ out, and you will be as guilty before him, as those who did swear by *Malcham*.

IV. We are now, in the fourth place, to enquire why Jesus Christ doth use so much importunity with Sinners to accept of him?

1. Christ doth not use this earnestness with us, as though he stood in any need of us. It is not to acquire any advantage or benefit to himself from us, but for our sakes, and for our good; that we may reap those Satisfaction which spring from Peoples enjoying of him. He is absolutely perfect, and doth not need any thing from us. As he is
God,

God, he was eternally blessed before we were in being. And if we consider him as Man, the humane Nature is unconceivably blessed, in that personal Union it is admitted unto with the Divine. Those glorious Discoveries which are made to him, those blessed Communications which are imparted to the humane Nature, and that unintelligible intimacy there is betwixt the two Natures, do enrich him as Man, with incomprehensible satisfactions and felicities.

Indeed, if we consider Christ with reference to the Relation he bears to Believers, and the number of God's Elect, and how his Mystical Body is not complete, till the whole number be effectually called and brought together unto him, we may perceive something there which may somewhat illustrate his earnestness in importuning Sinners to comply with his gracious Offers, for herein we take notice of him in the execution of his Office. And for this very end it is, amongst others, that he hath appointed several Offices in his Church, *Ephes. 4. 11, 12, 13.* But what we are

chiefly to refer his earnestness and importunity, unto what we may impute it to, with greatest safety and assurance, is divine, free, and undeserved Love.

2. He doth not use this earnestness with Sinners, as though he could not procure himself admittance without their concurrence. God ordinarily requireth our concurrence, even as to those Instances wherein he doth most wonderfully display and magnify the Riches of his Grace towards us; not as if we our selves were to, have the greatest hand in the Work, or that it could not be effected, unless we did exert our strength for that purpose. But because he will deal with us as with rational Creatures. He will not force and drive Men into Heaven and Happiness against their wills. He proceeds in such a way as is most proper to work upon our reasonable Faculties; and he makes use of them for the perfecting of what he designs. He doth ordinarily make use of rational Expedients with Men; and if these prove unsuccessful, those Persons are for their inexcusable

inexcusable obstinacy and stubbornness, justly rejected, 2 *Theff.* 2. 11, 12.

The Lord Jesus Christ hath *the Key of David*, *he openeth and no Man shutteth*, Rev. 3. 7. He hath power over all Hearts, and can command admittance when he pleaseth, but he thinks fit to use importunity; and to proceed in such a way as is most suitable unto our Natures. And he doth thus;

1. To testify, with the greater force and evidence, his wonderful great Love to Sinners, how ready and willing he is to save them; He might say to Sinners, at the first repulse they give him, *Let the filthy be filthy still, and let the unclean be unclean still.* But when he puts up many denials and affronts, and still renews his earnest Sollicitations, and still condescends to argue and plead with Sinners, his Love must be acknowledged on all hands, by all sorts of Persons, to be extraordinary great, and fit to win and constrain our Hearts to Submit to, and close with his Tenders. O, what refractory, helpless, and even unpitiable Wretches are they, who will

hurry themselves to Hell in despite of all his Love! Miserable and wilful Wretch, what canst thou propose to thy self, in rejecting and flying from the tenders of thy Saviour's Love? Canst thou think to Sweeten and indear Damnation to thee, by preferring it before Life? The whole Work of Redemption and Salvation is founded on, and springs from Love; every Passage belonging to it, is a most great and pregnant demonstration of Love. And in a very particular, even sensible manner, doth our Blessed Saviour discover, manifest, and approve the exceeding Riches and Greatness of his Love, in being so earnest and importunate with Sinners for admittance.

2. That all obstinate and impenitent rejecters of Christ, and Grace, may be at last without any excuse. He that stubbornly stands out against all the Divine Courtings, and loves his Lusts so immoderately, that he will not be prevailed with by Christ, nor all his intreaties to renounce and forsake them, must needs be in a very forlorn and dreadful

dreadful state. When the Lord Jesus shall come to Judgment, what will that miserable Wretch do? Sinner! thou wilt not have one word to say in thy own defence: Thou must stand astonished, full of shame and confusion, silent and dumb, without any Apology and Excuse. Nay, how loudly wilt thou then complain against, and upbraid and reproach thy self, for thy past contempt, and mad refusing of offered Grace and Mercy! How unmercifully and cruelly, to thy own unspeakable vexation, wilt thou then roar forth thy sense of thy approaching just Damnation?

Some may think to make Apologies for themselves, and pretend they were ignorant, they had not the Means, the Helps, the Opportunities others had, otherwise they would not have done as they did. But thou stubborn refuser of Christ, whosoever thou art, know thou for a certainty, thy Mouth will be stopped, The Lord Jesus will tell thee to thy Face, before Angels, Men, and Devils, that thou art that wicked Wretch with whom he was treating so long, and

with so much earnestness, but all in vain. Ungrateful contemptuous Sinner ! I did not only shed my Blood, and pour out my Soul unto death for thee, but I condescended to treat more particularly with thy self ; I tendered thee all this Happiness and Glory ; I did entreat and perswade, and beseech thee to entertain me, and accept of the Benefits, and Priviledges, and Mercies, the Graces, Felicities, and Inheritances, purchased by my spotless and precious Blood ; I pleaded many Arguments with thee ; I urged such and such Considerations to thy Soul and Conscience ; I did thus, not once, or twice, but for so many Years together, so often, so earnestly, by so many and such various means, but thou wouldst not hear my Voice, thou didst not open the Door to me, thou didst finally resolve to keep thy Heart shut against me. If thou hadst hearkened to me, and received me into thy Heart, I would have made all my Promises good to thee, thou shouldst have been for ever in this Blessed and Holy Society, inheriting that Glory and Happiness, those who did
receive

receive me are entred into. But what, thou ungrateful wicked Sinner, Self-destroying wilful Wretch, canst thou now expect at my Hands ! Hast thou any thing to object why I should not denounce and make good my formerly declared Threatnings against thee ! O poor, miserable, confounded Creature, how silent wilt thou stand ! Whither wilt thou sink under all the horrible misgivings of thy own Soul, and the insupportable terrifying Accusations, Reprimands, and Lashes of thy enraged guilty Conscience ! and the weight and terror of all that fearful Destruction, and dreadful Condemnation which is just coming upon thee ! How will the Righteousness and Justice of the Sentence which shall be past upon thee, be approved, owned, and witnessed unto, by all that shall be there Spectators, both Angels, Men, and Devils !

The Lord Jesus will remove out of the way, all shew and appearance of excuse. His pleading with us at present, if we receive him not, will be a dreadful Witness, and will make extraordinarily against us at the last Day.

If I had not come, and spoken unto them, they had not had Sin; but now they have no Cloak for their Sin, John 15. 22.

V. Lastly, We are, in the last place, to make some Application of what hath been discoursed. And,

1. We hence learn where Men must charge their own Destruction. You see how willing and ready God and Christ are, that you should be saved. How earnestly they entreat you to accept of Life, to fly from Wrath, and escape Damnation; read Ezek. 18. 31, 32. Ezek. 33. 11. 1 Tim. 2. 4. It is your own wilfulness and obstinacy which must bear the blame. Men would fain charge God, or Christ, or any thing with their destruction, but themselves. But alas! their Guilt will not be so easily shifted off, they themselves are the most, if not only, faulty. God and Christ, do as much as we can modestly, as we can reasonably desire for our welfare. They do not take any pleasure in our ruine, they offer Mercy, and intreat us to accept it. Angels they are ready to minister

ster for our good ; good Ministers, and good People, desire and labour all they can to prevent our Condemnation. Alas ! none but wicked Men and Devils are pleased with, or dare knowingly help forward our Ruin and Damnation. But we our selves are the principal Causes and Authors of our own eternal unhappiness, *Hos.* 13. 9. We keep Christ out of our Hearts, we will not listen to his Calls, nor attend unto his Voice ; we will not go to him that we may have Life ; nor, we will not entertain him, when he comes himself unto us and offers us Life. We resist his Motions, and oppose him in all the Instances of his Love. And what can we then expect, but that he should finally reject and disown us ?

2. We may hence observe the great senselessness and stupidity Men are generally involved in. O ! how hard and insensible is Man's Heart naturally ! how do People live, even under the Administration of the Gospel, as if they had no Souls, nor any Concerns relating to another World to attend unto ! They
mind

mind not Christ, nor do they take any care to have their Hearts prepared for him. People are soon apprehensive of temporal, corporal Dangers ; but tho their Souls are every minute in danger, and Christ is calling to, and warning them, setting before them their hazard, and counselling them to come to him, that they may be safe and secure, how idely and unconcernedly do they sit, and take no notice at all of what is said ? O how hard must those Hearts needs be, which will not, by all the Rhetorick, Eloquence, Affection, and Earnestness of the Son of God, be wrought on, prevailed with, or won over to a serious consideration of another state !

3. This should encourage the Ministers of Jesus Christ, to hold on patiently in the discharge of their Work, in earnest importunate beseeching Sinners to be reconciled unto God, and accept of Christ. It is indeed a great discouragement, when a Man labours for nought, and when for his earnestness and heartiness in his Work, he is slighted, reproached, and abused in the World.

World. And indeed, Ministers find it hard to keep up their Spirits, and go on unweariedly in an uninterrupted renewing of their affectionate Entreaties, when they long perceive the Word trampled under-foot, and the most serious testimonies of spiritual, fervent desire of Mens Salvation, despised and nick-named. Ministers are too prone to despond, and to be dejected, when their Labours and Endeavours continue long without Success, when they see Men remain as stubborn, and as violent opposers of Christ, after Instruction, Warnings, and multiplied vehement Entreaties and Perswasions, as they were before. It is heartless, nay, it is afflicting, and exceeding grievous to the Soul and Spirit of a true Gospel-Minister, to have occasion to cry out, *Who hath believed our Report? and to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed?* Isa. 53. 1. But this should not discourage, or make us desist one jot from our most vigorous Importunity. For besides that, *Our Judgment is with the Lord, and our Work, or Recompence, is with our God,* Isa. 49. 4.

We

We have much encouragement, and obligation too, to persist, from the Example of our Blessed Master. If Christ himself doth wait long, and useth one Argument after another with Sinners, should not we, who are but his Servants and Messengers, sent to plead his Cause with Sinners, imitate him both in Patience and Importunity?

4. This may justly encourage poor Sinners to come to Christ, and to be earnest and importunate in their Addresses to the Throne of Grace. If the Lord Jesus Christ do condescend thus to entreat and beseech Sinners to receive him, no doubt but he will very graciously accept of, and receive those who do come unto him; consult *Mat. 11. 28. Isa. 55. 1, 2, 3. Hos. 14. 1, 2.*

A returning Sinner, is the welcomest Guest to Jesus Christ. What joy doth such an one occasion in Heaven! with what satisfaction did the Father receive and entertain the returning Prodigal! how do the glorious and blessed Spirits above rejoice, and sing for gladness, when a Sinner forsakes his unrighteous Courses,

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Courses, seeks after, and returns unto his Saviour, and sincerely closeth with and embraceth him? *Luke 15. 7.*

And as Christ is importunate with us, so he would have us to be importunate in our Applications unto him. He is very much pleased with our importunity at the Throne of Grace, When we insist on what he hath done and suffered, when we plead his Office, and his Promises, and become so earnest and vigorous in our Prayers and Wrestlings, that we resolve we will not let him go till he blesteth us. He sometimes hides his Face, and seems to withhold his Ears from our Cries; but it is, that hereby he may awaken us from our chilliness and deadness in the Duty, try our Love to himself, and quicken and engage us to a greater fervency in our Addresses. Nay, he seems to make this a necessary Requisite to our coming to him acceptably, *Mat. 11. 12.*

5. Is the Lord Jesus Christ very importunate with Sinners to receive & entertain him; then let us all be hence perswaded, and prevailed with to embrace and close with his Motions. Do not resist and oppose

oppose him any longer, do not delay to open unto him, and give him that reception he calls for. Are you in love with Death ! will you resolve to court Damnation as sollicitously, and with as much fervency, as you are entreated to accept of Christ and Salvation ? What hast thou, Sinner, to except against Christ ? Why wilt thou add this, of sturdy, inexcusable, and most hideous frustrating the highest design of Love, in refusing to accept of, and comply with an earnest importunate Saviour, to all thy other Provocations ? Art thou afraid thou shalt not sink low enough into the bottomless Pit, nor find sorrow and torment enough in Hell, unless thy contempt of Grace, and despising of Christ, may add weight to thy former Guilt, and make the unquenchable infernal Flames more scorching, and to prey on thee with greater vehemence and fury ! Sinner, Hell will be direfully black and terrible, the infernal Torments will insupportably afflict and macerate ; the loss of Heaven, and the gracious presence of the Divine Majesty, will be inexpressibly dreadful and

and confounding, will fill with unsufferable remorse and horror, when they shall appear to be the Fruits of Mens wilfulness and choice. Exercise reason therefore once in thy Life, and hearken to Advice; Do not be ambitious to plunge thy self into the utmost depth of Divine Indignation and Fury, by offering the most provoking contemptuous Affront to the Riches of God's Grace and Love: for, fancy thou, thy Patience, Strength, and Courage, to be never so great and invincible, yet the least measure of Damnation will presently baffle and triumph over them: It will soon weary thee out, fill thee with such horrors, and extort and force from thee such dreadful howlings and shreiks, as will fully manifest thy Impatience is boundless, and thy Misery remediless.

Sinner! why wilt thou reject the gracious Offers which thy Saviour makes thee? Why wilt thou deny him admittance, when he tenders thee Himself, and all his Benefits? What better, what more desirable Guest canst thou have? Whether dost thou think it better,

ter, thy Heart should be full of filthy diabolical Suggestions, and noisom Lusts; or that thy Soul should be the Temple of God, and be beautified and enriched with all sorts of Graces and Divine Dispositions?

What is it then that keeps Christ out of thy Heart? What is it that makes thee unwilling to yield to thy Saviour's Importunity? produce thy shadowy vain pretences, and see how thou delectest thy self! Canst thou value the Wealth and Riches of the World, more than the Son of God, who priz'd thee at such a rate, as to lay down his Life for thee! certainly thou dost esteem them much above their worth, and unless thou rectify this Mistake in a little time, thou wilt make a very foolish bargain for thy self.

O stupid Sinner! awake, rouse up thy self, shame thy self out of thy in-cogitancy, folly, falseness and ingratitude! Are the transitory, empty, counterfeited pleasures of Sin, of greater value, and more precious to thee, than those Rivers, those Oceans of real transcendent satisfactions and delights
which

which are in God's presence, and at his right Hand ! Can a perishing uncertain World, assure thee of better and more splendid entertainment than he can, who is over all, God blessed for ever, of whose fulness we all receive, and who filleth all in all ! Are not the transports and raptures of Saints and Angels to be preferred before all those gross and fulsome Diversions, carnal and foolish Men do so madly doat on ? Canst thou think it better, and more rationally desirable, to be a Beast on Earth, than to be like one of the shining glorious Seraphims, in the Regions of Light, and Peace, and Joy ?

Hast thou any thing to except against the Terms thy Saviour doth propound ? Doth he invite thee to any thing that is unreasonable ? doth he lay any burthen on thee, which is insupportable, or unto which he will not administer strength proportionable ? Thou canst not pretend any thing of all this ; what he requires, is almost obviously reasonable, just, good, and equal. And do's the Lord Jesus call and importune thee to attend to the sweetest Voice, and the

the most heavenly and ravishing News that was ever made known: Do's he, who dwelleth in the highest Heavens, condescend to entreat for an abode with thee, that he may communicate Himself, and his Riches and Benefits to thee, in the freest and most friendly manner, and wilt thou yet reject him? O, how great must thy Guilt needs be! what an aggravation will this be, both of thy Sin, and Folly, and Damnation!

But to help thee a little more to quicken, and to make some impression on thy Affections, let me propose these few Questions, and do thou perform thy Duty faithfully in answering them to thy own Conscience sincerely, and urging them impartially on thy own Soul.

Quest. 1.

What art thou without Christ? O, Sinner, whilst thou art in thy Sins, thou art no better than an Enemy to the great God of Heaven and Earth; a very

very Fire-brand of Hell, *Ephes. 2. 12.*
 If thou hadst the Plague broke on thee,
 or wert under any desperate Distem-
 per, how welcome would a Physician
 be to thee, who could infallibly cure
 and heal thee? Nay, what speed
 wouldst thou make in enquiring and
 searching out for such an one, if thou
 couldst hear of him? And what, shall
 thy Soul be under the worst of Plagues,
 even the dominion of thy Lusts and
 Sins? Is thy condition such, that thou
 art every minute in danger of having
 all the Vials of God's Wrath poured
 out upon thee, and wilt thou still re-
 ject thy Saviour, and sturdily refuse his
 help, when he only can administer pro-
 per Remedies, and effect thy Cure and
 Deliverance?

Quest. 2.

What hast thou to trust to, whilst
 without Christ? Alas! all things but
 Christ, are broken, perishing, afflict-
 ing Reeds, such Props, as if trusted
 to, will but deceive us, and make our
 fall the greater and more ruinous.

Alas,

Alas Sinner ! if thou hadst all the World, its Power, its Wealth, its Glory ; yea, if thou hadst all the cunning and artifice of Hell too, these will not yield thee one jot of comfort or supply, when thy Want shall be greatest and most urgent. O how sad was it with that poor Soul, that having long slighted Christ, and despised Grace, being at last brought under the Lashes and Accusations of an awakened condemning Conscience, could take no rest, receive no comfort, but was full of horror and black despair ; when his Friends and Attendants spake to him of, applauded him for, and presented before him the Honours and Preferments he had obtained in the World, the Wealth and Estate he was master of, and remembered him of his past Pleasures, the things he was wont to be most delighted with, and endeavoured to divert him by Musick, and other Entertainments ; all these proved insipid, nay, vexatious. O, said he, these I loved too much heretofore, they have been my bane, these wound and torment me ! These are not Christ ! for these I ventur'd

ventur'd and sold my Soul, I prefer-
 red them above Christ. These inflame
 my grief, these wound me to the Heart,
 these imbitter and make my Life a bur-
 then to me; these kindle Hell in my
 Soul, these weigh and sink me down in-
 to the bottomless Pit! I have no sup-
 port at all, nothing to trust to. There
 is none but Christ can do me good, or
 yield me help; and it is him I have
 despised and slighted, whose Wounds,
 and whose Love, cry for Vengeance a-
 gainst me.

Quest. 3.

What wilt thou be able to say for
 thy self at last, if thou art without
 Christ? Come, Sinner! thou canst
 talk, and be as unconcerned at present
 as any Man. Thou dar'st, it may be
 now, to scorn Christ, ridicule and make
 sport at his most solemn and affectionate
 Entreaties, and revile those his Messen-
 gers, who would perswade thee to close
 with his gracious Offers. But this is
 not the way to Heaven: When thou
 shalt appear before the great Tribunal
 of

of the most Just and Holy God, thou wilt not dare to repeat any of thy opprobrious reproachful Expressions, thou wilt not be able to justify thy contemning of Christ. Their state and condition will be very dreadful, who shall be left to plead their own Cause at the great Day of Judgment. Be as great and daring as thou wilt at present, know thou, that more potent and valiant Persons than thy self, will then be covered with shame, be full of consternation and horror, and not dare to open their Mouths in their own vindication. Didst thou never read nor hear of those great and powerful, wealthy and honourable, courageous and valiant Ones, who shall call to the Mountains to fall on them, and the Hills to cover them, from the Face and Wrath of the Lamb? *Rev. 6. 15, 16, 17.*

Quest. 4. What wilt thou think of Christ, and what wilt thou be willing to give for an Interest in Christ, at the approach

of Death, and when thou must come before the Judgment of the Great God? If Christ will be precious and desirable when thou seest Death and Hell naked before thee, certainly he ought to be precious to thee at present. Thou dost not know how soon Death may arrest thee, how soon thou mayst lie under its stroke; within how few Days or Hours God may say to thee, Come, Sinner, give up thy Account! O, Sinner, whoever thou art, be thy Thoughts what they will at present, yet if thou hadst Worlds, yea, thousands of Worlds at thy disposal, thou wouldst gladly and freely give and part with them all at the great Day of Judgment, for the least saving Interest in Christ. O, Sinner! dost thou know what it is to leave the World with Sin and Guilt cleaving to thy Soul? Dost thou know what it is to die, and enter into Eternity, without having thy Peace made with God? Dost thou know what it is to stand before the Tribunal of an unreconciled God, and to have Christ appear against thee, demanding full Justice against thee,

G

thee,

thee, for thy stubborn, refractory, contemptuous despising of Him, and his often tendered rich Grace?

Quest. 5.

What Reflections have those who are now in Hell, on their having slighted Christ, and stubbornly stood out against all his Entreaties? Do any of those things which they preferred above Christ, when they were on Earth, afford them any real comfort? Have they any abatement of their Pain and Torment, by remembering that they purchased such Pleasures, or amassed to themselves such Treasures, &c. by rejecting and refusing to comply with the gracious Offers the Son of God did make to them? Alas, their remembering of these things, doth inflame Hell the more; this makes Damnation more than ordinarily terrible; this makes the sight of God and Christ amazing and dreadful to the utmost degree. To consider they sold God and Christ, their Souls, and Heaven, and Happiness, for such Trifles, such perishing and

and unsatisfying things, is beyond all imagination penetrating and afflicting. O! couldst thou see the Damned in their Chains, and didst thou hear their shrieks and howlings; or wouldst thou but consider how their misery and unhappiness is heightened and increased by their despising and making light of Christ? What thoughts wouldst thou entertain! how dreadful wouldst thou apprehend the rejecting of Christ to be, when he makes his gracious Visits, and pleads and expostulates with Sinners for admittance? What thoughts wouldst thou have, didst thou hear those miserable and helpless Wretches crying out, O the Saviour that we did slight! O the Salvation we did neglect! O the Offers of Grace and Mercy we did wickedly and contemptuously cast behind our backs! O the many, the earnest, the importunate, the affectionate and loving entreaties and courtings of the Son of God, which we did stubbornly resist, and offer the most unexcusable and wicked despite unto! O, it is this, this, that makes our Damnation thus out of measure, to exceed

and transcend theirs, who were never in a capacity of sinning at our rate ! 'Tis this that makes Hell so hot and glowing to us, that sinks us so much below all others in this bottomless Pit ! Q. what would these do, might they have the Offers which thou refusest to accept of ? How would they rejoice, how speedily, gladly, and heartily would they close with Christ, might they have an offer of Grace, Pardon, and Mercy made once more to them !

Quest. 6.

Dost thou think that any of those who have received Christ in sincerity, did ever repent of their so doing ? It is our ignorance of Christ, and unacquaintedness with him, that makes us think so lightly of him. Did we but taste and know how good the Lord is ; had we but the same sense, experience, and knowledge of his Excellencies they have, who do indeed admit him into their Hearts, we should have the like Love, Zeal, and Affection for him which they have. Those who have received

received him, do rejoice in and love him : They account him the only Joy of their Hearts; they esteem him their Portion, their All, and their only Good. Have not those who, for the sake of Christ, have been exposed to all kind of Sufferings, Hardships, and ill Usages in the World rejoiced in the same? Have not they found the satisfactions accruing to them, from the Faithfulness and Love of Christ, so exceeding great, and full of inexpressible sweetness and comfort, they have almost overlook'd, they have really thought all the Sufferings of this Life very little and inconsiderable, especially when Faith in Christ hath mounted and carried their Souls to take a view and prospect of what Christ will hereafter advance them unto? *Rom. 8. 18.* Gold and Silver, Crowns, and Earthly Kingdoms, are of no value, more vile and contemptible than the Dung and Mire of the Streets, when made use of to bribe and hire one that has received Christ into his Heart, to fall off from him and reject him. I have served Christ (said *Polycarp*) fourscore and six Years, and he never

did me any harm ; and do you think (said he to those who would have bribed and perswaded him to renounce Christ) that now I will renounce and blaspheme, and dishonour my King and Saviour ? Do you think the glorified Saints are sorry they chose and received Christ ? Why, they can every jot as easily be weary of Heaven, as repent of their entertaining such a Guest.

Now do thou exercise thy Thoughts about these things with the greatest seriousness, and answer these Questions distinctly and impartially unto thy Conscience, and press on thy Soul such Considerations as thou findest have the greatest tendency to startle, to awaken and move thee, that thou mayst not continue under the dreadful guilt of slighting Christ, and rejecting the gracious Motions he doth make thee of his Love. And, O that I knew what Words would excite thy drowsy Soul, and what Arguments would influence and make some kind of impressions on thy Mind, Affections, and Heart ? I would urge them for thy good, with all the

the life and fervency that is possible. Consider, Sinner, doth the Son of God condescend to plead and argue with thee for thy Benefit and Comfort? This is a very wonderful thing indeed; the Heavens may well be called to attend, and the Earth to give ear; such a prodigy of Love may make impressions on the very Mountains and Rocks. And what, wilt thou still resist his Courtings, and be the more contemptuous, by how much the more importunate he is with thee? O, how justly may we call to the Heavens to be astonished, and the Earth to be horribly afraid, at the manifestation of such stupidity and ingratitude? How will all the Creatures, inanimate, and senseless things, upbraid such sottish sturdiness! and finally bear witness, and give in evidence against it?

But, alas, after all, what signifies the Discourse of a poor Mortal? *Melancthon* found, by experience, that he had reason to say, *The old Man, in the Hearts of Sinners, was too strong for young Melancthon.* It is not

in the Minister's Power to reach the Heart. But Glorious, Almighty, and most Gracious God, thou art above all, and thou canst speak to the Conscience, and overcome the most perverse and stubborn Heart; thou canst, and dost ordinarily make thy Strength and power to appear, in the weakness of thy meanest Servants: Lord, to thee we turn, and of thee we beg, that that Power and Plenty of thy good Spirit may be sent forth, that poor Sinners may not walk in darkness, and be held any longer in bondage by Satan and their Lusts, but that they now may cast away from them their Idols, may yield up themselves to Christ in the sincerity of their Hearts, and not oppose and resist him any longer. Lord, do thou look down in thy Power and Strength; and do thou mightily perswade and prevail on the Hearts of those who have hitherto stood out against the Calls and Entreaties of their Saviour! exert thy Power, stretch forth thy mighty Arm, descend in the abundance of thy Grace, and bring thy Word and Exhortations to
Peoples

Peoples Souls and Consciences, with thy special Efficacy, and then shall People hear thy Son's Voice, and knock, and open unto him.

Now, Sinner, if thou art at all affected with any of these Considerations, and dost truly desire to receive Christ into thy Heart ; I will conclude all I have at this time to say unto thee, by proposing a few Directions for thy help, and assistance.

I.

Labour to get a deep affectionate sense of thy own insufficiency, emptiness, and misery without Christ. Study the Law of God, how strict and punctual it is ! How many Duties are commanded, how many Sins forbid ; what Curses and Judgments threatened ; how weak and impotent thou art ; how far the Law is from either communicating Strength, or providing thee a Pardon ; How powerful and severe infinite Justice is ; how liable thou art, and this upon innumerable accounts, to all the

Vengeance and Horror infinite Justice can inflict : How dreadful, how miserable, how helpless thy state is without a Mediator ! Think on these things till thou art throughly sensible of thy need of Christ ; and how impossible it is for thee to escape any other way than by Christ. We need Christ to present our best Services to God, and obtain them acceptance with the Father. O, what need have we then of Christ, to save us from our manifold Sins, and from the direful Punishments they deserve, *Rev. 3. 18. Luke 15. 21.* Christ will be welcome indeed, when we truly see our need of him.

II.

Strive to get thy Heart cleansed from every thing which is contrary to Christ, and hath a tendency to keep him out of thy Heart. Get every Sin imbittered to thy Soul, that thou mayst hate every thing which is an Enemy to Christ. Oppose Christ to every Lust, and sinful stirring of Heart ; harbour no Lust nor Sin in thy Heart, fight against Temptations ;

tations; learn to overcome Temptations and Sins, by reviving in thy Mind the opposition and enmity there is betwixt Christ and Sin; curb and check, mortify and subdue every sinful Inclination, by alleadging against it, Thou art an Enemy to my Saviour! to allow and entertain thee, would be to fight against Christ. O, I will not for a World do any thing that may offend and displease the Son of God.

III.

Pray earnestly that the Spirit of God may mould and form thy Heart into a right frame and temper for Christ. When a Prince comes to take up his residence at any Place, or House, it is not only necessary that the Luggage, and Lumber, and Filth, be removed and cast out of Doors, but that all places be righted up, and have their proper Furniture: So when Christ comes to take up his abode with us, we are not only to cast away our Lusts and Sins, but our Hearts must be fitted and disposed to receive him, by the powerful

ful Operation of his Holy Spirit, beautifying and enriching them with Divine and Heavenly Qualifications. And therefore it will concern us to be earnest in our Prayers, that the good Spirit of God may come down upon us, and make our Hearts and Souls meet Temples for the Son of God to dwell in.

IV.

Go forth unto Christ, by the actings of Faith upon all occasions. *Let Christ dwell in your Hearts by Faith*, Ephes. 3. 17. according to every alteration in your condition; and according to all the diversities of Providence do you look unto Christ, exercise Faith on him, and by Faith fetch supplies of Grace from him.

V.

Meditate much and often on the Love of Christ to Sinners. Read over the Gospel, the several Apostolical Epistles, and the many Prophecies concerning

cerning Christ, especially *Isa. 63.* take notice of the many remarkable Passages there, relating to Christ, declaring his Condescension and Love, weigh them seriously, and press them upon thy own Soul and Conscience, dwell on these Matters in thy Thoughts, and expostulate with thy self about them. What, hath the Son of God taken my Nature ! has the King of Glory condescended to live here in the form of a Servant ! did he patiently undergo all the unjust Affronts and Contempts of lewd and prophane People ! did he bear the weight of God's Wrath, and actually lay down his Life in the most open, scandalous, cursed, lingering, and painful kind of Death then known in the World, and was all this for my sake ! O, incomprehensible Love ! What shall I return unto my Saviour for all this ? I can never love Christ enough ; may I never cease admiring the many Instances wherein his Love hath broke forth unto me ; may I so wonder at, and be affected with all these things, that love to Christ may shine through all the passages of my Life :

Life: May I never be at rest, till I do arrive at the full enjoyment of my Saviour in his own Kingdom. What, has the Lord Jesus Christ done so much for me! has he revealed such Truths, made such Promises, suffered such Sorrows, submitted to such a Death, as are recorded in the Holy Scriptures? are so many glorious and wonderful Things related concerning him? Doth he now reign in Heaven, and hath he purchased such blessed Inheritance, and satisfying Treasures for poor Sinners? Nay, doth he still importune and entreat me to accept of Him and his Benefits! God forbid that I should oppose his Motions, and resist his Love any longer. Shall the King of Glory be slighted and excluded still by me? Shall I wilfully cast away my own Soul, and stubbornly neglect this great Salvation? God forbid. Shall it be writ on my Grave, Here lies the sturdy ungrateful Wretch, that did wilfully resist Jesus Christ; the Wretch that resolved to force his way to Hell, through all the Impediments and Discouragements, infinite Justice, and infinite Mercy had laid in his

his way? that vile unpitiable Miscreant,
that would damn himself in spite of
Love it self?

VI. **Converse much with those who are**
experienced Christians, and have much
acquaintance with Christ. *He that*
walketh with wise Men, shall be wise; but
a Companion of Fools shall be destroyed,
Prov. 13. 20. Such People will very
much assist thee in thy closing with
Christ, by their Discourses, Exhorta-
tions, and Practice. They can tell
thee such things concerning Christ,
from their own experience, as will
warm and melt thy Heart, and inflame
thy Affections. They will contribute
much to thy help by their advice and
counsel, by the accounts they can give
thee off their own experiences, by their
watchfulness over thee, and by their
 fervent effectual Prayers for thee.

VII. Labour

VII.

Labour to be acquainted with, and to observe all the Motions and Workings of Christ towards Sinners, and close with; and improve every one of them, when he is pleased to exert any of them towards thy self. Take notice of the Calls he doth give thee in his Word, and the awakening visits he doth make thee by his providential Occurrences, and improve these to put thee on a more diligent search, and close walking after him; and to excite and quicken in thee more fervent desires after Communion with him.

VIII.

Conscientiously frequent those Ordinances wherein Christ hath promised his more especial Presence. Prepare thyself carefully to meet thy Lord, and come with passionate Desires, and confident Expectations, grounded on his Faithfulness, Word, and Promise, that he will exhibit himself unto those
Souls

Souls, that sincerely long and wait for him.

IX.

Lastly ; Faithfully resign and give up thy self to Christ. When thy Heart is affected truly with a sense of Christ's Love, then desire him, by fervent Prayer, that he will be pleased to take thee into Covenant with himself, and make a hearty, faithful, entire resignation of thy self unto him. O, Blessed Jesus, most Holy Saviour ! I am unworthy I acknowledg to make use of thy Name ; I have often resisted and sinned against thy constraining Love, but I am heartily sorry now that ever I did so ! O, compassionate and tender-hearted Saviour, reject not an humble, returning, mourning Penitent ; embrace me, the unworthiest of all others in the Arms of thy Mercy, and admit me into thy favour ; the more stubborn, and headstrong, and wilful I have been, the more abundantly let thy Grace be manifested toward me, and bring me under the more powerful influences of thy Love. Lord, seize, by the Power of thy Grace,
and

and take possession of this Soul: Gracious Saviour, whose Bowels have ever yearned over the miserable, and who hast been always compassionate and gracious to the unworthy, favourably accept of this poor Oblation: Lord, it is the purchase of thy own Blood; O, reject not, despise not, cast not away what thou hast bought at so dear a rate. Lord, here is my Soul, my Body, my Heart, my Affections, my Mind, my Judgment, my Will: Lord, here is all that I have; Lord, I resign up all unto thee, without any reservation; do with all, as pleaseth thee best, only accept of them: O Lord, I love thee above all, I desire, with my whole Soul, to love thee every Day more and more. Lord, dwell in my Heart, rule over my whole Man, bring all my Powers unto a true and sound subjection unto, and compliance with thee in every thing: May my Soul always admire thee, my Heart love thee, my Tongue praise thee, my Lips speak of thy Glory and Goodness: May my Life glorify thee; may I in every part of my practice, serve and honour thee; may all my

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Faculties and Members be ready and faithful Servants for, and unto thee. Lord, I long to be with thee, my Soul panteth after thee. *For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain, Phil. 1. 21.*

F I N I S.
